



First steps

Thank you for joining the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Film Office's location database.

We are striving for the borough to be a film friendly area and are actively working to increase the number of film and high-end tv productions coming to the area to film on location. We also work with smaller budget productions, not-for-profit and student filmmakers as well.

The borough is a very valuable area in terms of location viability as we are in close proximity to London and a number of studio facilities:

- Bray Studios, Windsor, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- Pinewood Studios, Iver Heath
- Shepperton Studios, Shepperton
- Longcross Studios, Chertsey
- Warner Bros Leavesden, Leavesden
- Shinfield Studios, Reading
- Winnersh Studios, Wokingham
- Aborfield Studios, Wokingham
- Farnborough Studios, Farnborough

Our film office often receives briefs from production companies looking for a location in the area. As well as locations, production companies also look for spaces for unit base parking or areas for extras to get ready before they go on set. We hope to be able to match properties and spaces on our database with what the productions are looking for.

Once a brief is received, we will send a brochure to the production with photographs and a brief description of the property. If they are interested, we will then connect the property owner/manager and production company together via email. It is then the responsibility for the property owner and production company to work together to check if the location will work for both parties.

We will store your information as per our privacy notice – details of which are [here](#).

Although the film office will not be involved in negotiations between private property owners and production companies we are happy for you to contact us if you have a query you are struggling to resolve.



What happens next?

Once the Royal Borough's Film Office has connected you with a production company you are most likely to be contacted with a preliminary enquiry by the location manager (LM), assistant location manager (ALM) or member of the production team. They may ask for further information about your property as well as being able to provide more information about what they are looking for – such as dates, as well as an outline of how the location may be used. It is important to answer their enquiries as quickly as possible, within one working day if possible. The film industry works quickly and often to tight deadlines so having an understanding of this and responding in a timely fashion to queries is more likely to be successful with securing a booking.

If the production determine that the location is a good match they will organise for a location scout to visit your property to take their own photographs and quite literally scout the property out to see if it has potential to be the location they are looking for.

The scout will often be looking at many different places for the same brief, so this meeting is a good opportunity to sell the unique benefits of your property to be shortlisted as a potential location.

This is also the time to find out exactly what the production is looking for:

- how will they plan to use the buildings, grounds or car parks?
- how many crew, cast and supporting artists they anticipate being part of the shoot?
- will any alterations need to be made in order to facilitate filming?

When discussing the requirements of the need for the project you should be clear and set boundaries for what is and what isn't possible or allowed in relation to your property – such as access or adjustments.



Going forward

You should consider if the content and context of filming is a good fit for your property and if operating as a business whether it is compatible with your organisation's values or poses a reputational risk. Also consider how filming activity may impact any day-to-day business operations.

Be clear with your costs/fees as early into the initial enquiries as possible.

Confidentiality is important in the film industry and it would be expected that you keep the details of the shoot to yourself. You may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, or there

may be a clause regarding confidentiality within the location contract. You should check with the production if/when you are able to promote the filming that took place, which is usually once the project has been released. If your place is open to the public and will remain so in part during the prep/shoot/strike period then you should discuss with the location manager what you are able to say to the public and what any signage should say.

The filming may have an effect on other local residents and businesses, if this is the case the location manager should contact the council film office. The production is responsible for providing letters to those affected, while we will contact local key stakeholders to advise them of the filming in the area. This should be done before the prep or filming begins.



Parking

The production will usually require parking for the technical vehicles (camera, lighting, props etc) as close to the location as possible and whether you have space to facilitate - this should be discussed with the location manager. If there are on-street parking restrictions outside your property then the production will need to contact the film office so that we can advise on parking suspension/ dispensation applications.

Parking areas are also required for the unit base (cast trailers, hair and make up trailers, crew dining, mobile production office etc.) and crew parking. If you do not have enough space at your location then the location manager will find an area nearby to use. The film office has many spaces for unit bases in the area which we are happy to suggest.



Working on the highway

If the production needs to film the exterior of your property from the pavement, road, or needs to put equipment or lighting on the highway then separate permission from the council is required. The location manager will need to contact the film office to seek relevant permissions. Visit www.rbwm.gov.uk/filming or email filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk

Insurance

You should ensure that the production company will be able to provide public liability insurance of at least £5 million (this is industry standard, but if your property requires higher insurance you must advise the production company).

The council cannot accept any liability arising from any arrangement between the property owner and any production company. The production company will have public liability insurance as standard practice but you may wish to notify your own insurers that your property is being used in this fashion. We recommend you request a copy of the production's public liability insurance certificate and risk assessment as best practice.



Recces

The production may wish to do a number of recces at your property in order to achieve sign off and be able to issue and sign a contract. It is unlikely that you will get a firm commitment from the production in the first few visits, a good location manager should be able to talk you through the timeline of this further. As a guide, on a large production the recces may go like this:

- Initial preliminary scout(s)
- Location manager/production designer recce
- Director/producers and locations/art dept recce
- Various initial recces from art and electrical departments
- Technical recce with all heads of departments (HODs) closer to prep/filming date

Smaller productions, with a lower budget may not need as many visits pre-shoot.

The more complex the shoot requirements at the location, the more recces will generally be required.

You should have a representative that is familiar with your property and activities that will and will not be permitted at these recces to help answer any questions the crew may have.



Fees

It is difficult to provide guidance on the fee you should charge for use of your property as it can depend on many variable factors, such as complexity and duration of shoot, any amendments they wish to make, any additional staff or overheads you will need to facilitate the filming. If the property has other commercial uses it is advisable that the fee covers any loss of revenue that would occur if filming meant that business could not run as usual.

Contract

The production may have their own contract template they wish to use for a location agreement, or a document will have to be written from scratch.

Please seek legal guidance when entering into a contract.

As a minimum, the contract should include the following:

- Location address
- Fee
- Date and times the production will have access (for prep, shoot and strike period – this is explained further down)
 - ⇒ You may wish for a clause for overruns within this period – to cover overtime of staff for example
- Specifics about which areas of the property the company have access to
- Allowed alterations
- Clause for use of the property for re-shoots if required
- Clause guaranteeing re-instatement to original condition and repair/replacement/renumeration for any loss or damage.
- Any special issues / exceptions that should be stated – such as floor coverings throughout, or no use of naked flames in historic buildings.
- Note of when and how you can publicise the shoot if you wish.



Prep/Shoot/Strike

Prep

This is when the crew prepare the location for filming, so that when the main crew arrive on the shoot day everything is ready for them to start filming. The main departments involved in prep are the art department (which includes props, construction and sometimes sfx or greens teams) and the electrical department (lighting).

During prep you will have a key member of the location department to act as liaison.

Before prep begins you may consider taking photographs of your property to be used as your own reference for re-instatement after the shoot. The production should also take their own photos from reference.

The production will need to ask permission to make any changes to your property, these will be noted in your contract e.g. painting walls, moving furniture, running cables.

The length of prep depends on the complexity of the shoot, generally the longer the shoot, the longer the prep. The location manager will be able to provide guidance on the anticipated prep time they would need to get everything ready for the shoot.

Shoot

It is time for filming to begin! The trucks and trailers may roll in the day before shoot, again this will be discussed with the location manager. Be sure to be clear what time the crew will be on site and what time the shooting hours will be. The call time is the start of the filming day, but it is likely that you will have crew on site before call time to set up. It is the same with wrap time (when filming finishes) but some crew will need to stay on to pack equipment away.

It is important to be available during if the location manager needs you regarding any last minute changes they wish to make.

There is always a lot of planning that goes into a shoot, but sometimes there are script changes or maybe a request from the director that hasn't been anticipated. If you can be flexible and facilitate these changes then do, but if you have any strong objections then the production company should respect that.

Despite the best planning and notification you may find that local residents/businesses have complaints about the filming. The location manager should be the first point of contact, they should be keen to minimise the impact and disruption of filming on local residents. If your building is usually used by the public you may wish to consider the following to communicate any full/partial closure:

- Signage in advance
- Email/social media updates about closures
- If it is possible for the filming to be watched by the public consider setting up viewing areas
- Security/marshalls to help guide public around filming area
- Prebooked groups should be advised in advance that there will be partial/full closures
- Consider reduced entry fees if partially closed

Strike

Once filming has finished the trucks and trailers will roll out and the process of re-instating your property to its original condition will begin. Any departments that have been involved in the prep will come and strike out the set dressing and equipment. If there is any loss or damage to your property as a result of the filming this should be discussed with the location manager as soon as possible. Once you are happy with re-instatement the Location Manager will ask for you to sign their release form.

Now might be a good time to ask the location manager for a quote to use in your own marketing about their experience using your property as a location.

Finally

Once filming has been completed it would be greatly appreciated if you could relay back to the film office some brief details about the project. Without breaching any confidentiality agreements we would appreciate some details so that we can track the projects occurring in the area in order to collate information on the broader economic and cultural effects filming has in the borough.

Useful information to pass on to us would be:

- Approx size/number of shoot crew
- Length of prep/shoot/strike
- Type of production – film/HETV/commercial/music video/not for profit etc
- Length of time between initial enquiry and use of location.

If you have any further questions regarding location filming please contact the film office at filmunit@rbwm.gov.uk