

Last Updated: Friday, 13 April 2007, 15:34 GMT 16:34 UK

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House and contents may fetch £20m

About £20m is expected to be made from the sale of a historic home of the Earl of Dumfries and its contents.

Dumfries House, in Ayrshire, has been put up for sale by its owner the Marquess of Bute at a price of £6.75m.

The house's contents, which include some of the finest pieces of furniture made by Thomas Chippendale, are expected to make more than £12m.

One bookcase alone is hoped to fetch up to £4m which would be a record price for a piece of British furniture.

Johnny Bute, 48, who was a Formula One racing driver under the name Johnny Dumfries, first announced his intention to sell Dumfries House three years ago.

He said he wanted to restructure his family's finances and concentrate on his family home - Mount Stuart - on the Isle of Bute in the Firth of Clyde.

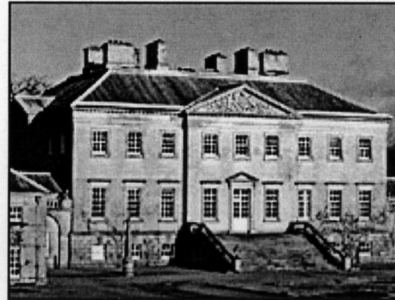
A statement from the marquess added that he hoped the sale would be beneficial to the communities of Cumnock, Auchinleck and East Ayrshire.

Dumfries House was designed and built by John, Robert and James Adam between 1754 and 1759 for William, the 5th Earl of Dumfries.


The last member of the Bute family to live in the house was Eileen, Dowager Marchioness of Bute, who died in 1993.

The property's furniture comprises some of Chippendale's most outstanding pieces.

It includes a George II bookcase which is expected to sell for between £2m and



Dumfries House and its contents have been put up for sale

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- Dumfries House sale items**
- ♦ £6.75m Dumfries House
 - ♦ £4m bookcase (above)
 - ♦ £1m oval mirrors
 - ♦ £800,000 overmantel mirror
 - ♦ £600,000 dining chairs

£4m.

♦ £500,000 card tables

The current sale record for British furniture is held by The Anglesey Desk, sold at Christie's for £1.76m in 1993.

Distinguished house

Charles Cator, deputy chairman of Christie's International, said the sale of the contents of Dumfries House was a significant one.

"Christie's have a proud tradition of offering works of art from distinguished houses and collections," he said.

"The importance of this auction ranks alongside the historic landmark sales of the past, such as Longleat, Houghton and Wentworth."

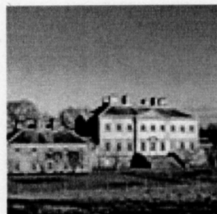
The furniture sale will take place in London on 12 and 13 July while the house is being sold by estate agents Savills.

The Scottish Government

News

You are here: [News](#) > [News Releases](#) > [2007](#) > [June](#) > [dumfries](#)

News Release



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Dumfries House saved for nation

27/06/2007

The Scottish Government is part of a newly-formed consortium that has reached agreement with the Marquis of Bute to purchase the 18th century Dumfries House and its collection to safeguard it for the nation.

The announcement of the agreement came today from Prince Charles who brought together the consortium to fund the acquisition of the house on the edge of Cumnock in East Ayrshire.

The Scottish Government, through Historic Scotland, is contributing £5 million towards the £45 million total cost of the project.

The business plan limits the financial involvement of the Scottish government. The house will be run by an independent trust, the Great Steward's Dumfries House Trust. It is hoped it will open to the public next year.

First Minister Alex Salmond 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 showcase 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."

The consortium comprises the Prince's Charities Foundation, Historic Scotland, The Art Fund, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Monument Trust, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and SAVE Britain's Heritage.

An auction sale of the house's contents due to be held next month will not now proceed.

Achievements: Dumfries House (June 2007)

Dumfries House **SAVED** for the nation

Against one of the toughest deadlines in the history of heritage, SAVE's campaign to preserve Dumfries House, its magnificent contents and beautiful 2000 acre estate has reached a triumphant conclusion.

The intervention of HRH The Prince of Wales with the stated intent of setting up a trust to own and open the house to the public, provides Dumfries House with a secure future of the best possible kind. It completes the financial package needed to secure the cancellation of the Christie's sale due to take place on July 12 & 13 at King Street, London. SAVE's initial plan for the house was drawn up with Kit Martin, the well-known rescuer of endangered historic houses, and developed into a detailed business plan by local surveyor Mark Gibson.

The SAVE campaign received its first initial boost from the Art Fund with an unprecedented pledge of £2million, the Garfield Weston Foundation (£1million) and the Monument Trust (£4million, subsequently increased to a magnificent £9million). Further funds have been raised with the approval of a grant of £7million from the NHMF and £5million from Historic Scotland. The shortfall has been covered by the Prince. Further funding will come from development of adjacent land, next to the town of Cumnock, with a model development through the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment.



Completed in 1758 for the 5th Earl of Dumfries by Robert and John Adam

SAVE's President Marcus Binney says "SAVE has fought many battles, but we have never had a success such as this. It saves not only the whole estate and one of the finest collections of furniture made by the greatest name in the whole of history of furniture, Thomas Chippendale. With this comes the best collection of contemporary 18th century Scottish furniture by the leading Scottish cabinet makers of the day. This furniture was all commissioned or bought for the house, has always remained there, and is all in superb condition. As Christies handsome catalogue shows it is all superbly documented and would have fetched record prices at auction as collection of such provenance and quality has come on the market in many years."

SAVE extends thanks to both Christies and John Bute for leaving open a window for realistic pre-sale bids till just three weeks before the sale.

SAVE wishes to pay special thanks to the many people in the town of Cumnock who have supported the campaign with £1 donations to the fighting fund, through the Kyle and Carrick Civic Society. In two afternoons more than a thousand signatures and a £1000 were collected in the High Street and the current total stands at £1250. Other important pledges to the fighting fund have come from a number of generous individuals. Adam Wilkinson Secretary of SAVE says "we have had fantastic support both locally and nationally in the form of donations and people's time and energy, in the belief that the saving of the Dumfries House can provide a major boost to Cumnock and the countryside around it while giving the public access to a cultural gem".

James Knox and Mark Gibson, who formed SAVE's Ayrshire action group said "this is a stunning result for Ayrshire, with the saving of Dumfries House there is now a cluster of internationally important buildings including Adam's Culzean Castle and the neighbouring Auchinlech House. The heritage led regeneration will breathe new life into this hard hit area."

ENDS

Notes to editors

BACKGROUND: Dumfries House is a complete and undisturbed work of the Adam brothers, John and Robert and James -exquisitely built, perfectly symmetrical in plan, with ornamental plasterwork of great delicacy and fine marble fireplaces. It contains, intact, Chippendale's first important commission, consisting of an extensive set of mahogany chairs, sofas, giltwood overmantels, girandoles and pier glasses, exotically crested rococo four poster beds, and towel rails, chamber pot cupboards and trays -the full range of kit that could be bought or commissioned from England's most famous cabinetmaker.

HISTORY: The house was commissioned by the 4th Earl of Dumfries, a man of exceptional taste with a fine picture collection. His new drawing room was designed round a magnificent set of Gobelins tapestries given to his cousin the Earl of Stair by Louis XIV while ambassador to France. Dumfries House also contains furniture by the best Scottish makers, notably Francis Brodie, William Mathie and Alexander Peter. Dumfries House passed by marriage to the Butes, who in the 19th century were to build two of the most astonishing houses in Britain, Cardiff Castle and Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute. Dumfries House became a dower house, left untouched until the 3th Marquess, feeling that it was the only one of his houses where he could be warm and comfortable, commissioned Robert Weir Schultz to extend it. With great subtlety Schultz doubled the depth of the wings, introducing domed corridors and a gallery to display all the Gobelins tapestries.

FURNITURE: Sebastian Pryke, an expert on the Edinburgh furniture makers, says: "There is more documented mid-18th-century Scottish furniture here than in the whole of the rest of the world." The correspondence shows that Lord Dumfries consulted the Earl of Hopetoun about the design; he in turn wrote to the high priest of Palladianism, Lord Burlington, shortly before his death. Robert Adam came to stay at old Leifnorris Castle in 1754 as the guest of the Earl for three months, laying out the foundations.

LANDSCAPE: The house stands in an Arcadian park with a handsome three-arch bridge over the River Lugar. It could be straight out of a Claude Lorraine landscape painting, with its two sets of John Adam lodges, an ice house and a Gothic temple on a hill by Robert Adam.

FUTURE PLANS: The SAVE plan for the estate showed how the major interiors could be opened to the public, while ancillary accommodation, including the wings, the home farm and the laundry be used as holiday accommodation, generating income to look after the house. Up to 26 apartments can be created in this way with no damaging alterations to the fabric or fine interiors. Further income was to come from visitors and events. The report was written by Mark Gibson who has rescued the nearby 2000-acre Craiggengillan estate from dereliction, and supported by The Pilgrim Trust and the Georgian Group.

Download the press release: 'Dumfries House SAVED for the Nation'

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