

NEWS RELEASE

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MINISTER ANNOUNCES STABILISATION PROGRAMME FOR MAVISBANK HOUSE

Linda Fabiani, MSP, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture today (Tuesday, 29 July) announced the decision to take forward a £2m stabilisation programme for Mavisbank House in Loanhead, Midlothian.

The Minister also announced that Historic Scotland will pursue compulsory acquisition of the House and will explore how greater public benefit can be gained from its ownership of the policies – the large area of designed landscape which the House overlooks.

The stabilisation measures, which include erecting a temporary roof on Mavisbank House, will arrest the deterioration of this historically significant category A-Listed house and secure its immediate future.

The Minister said: “I look forward to Historic Scotland progressing with the stabilisation programme and liaising with interested groups about its management of the policies. I hope it will ignite interest in Mavisbank House from across Scotland and encourage further interest in the retention and sustainability of the building.”

Alex Hammond-Chambers, Chairman of the Mavisbank Trust, said: “We are delighted that Historic Scotland has taken such positive action and a major step forward on the long road to saving Mavisbank. The Trust is keen to continue working with the Agency and other partners to secure a viable and long-term future for what has become a national icon”.

Councillor Adam Montgomery, Provost of Midlothian and Trustee of Mavisbank Trust said: “Midlothian Council is fully aware of the importance of Mavisbank House and has supported ongoing efforts over the years to restore the house to its former glory and I appreciate the support shown by the Minister. We welcome this decision to take forward the stabilisation programme and hope that it will generate further interest and investment in Mavisbank House.”

Historic Scotland owns the policies around the House. The present owners of Mavisbank have to date proved untraceable, despite various efforts over a long period and previous work on the site has had to be carried out under emergency powers. To overcome this unsatisfactory position, Historic Scotland therefore now also intends to seek ownership of the property through compulsory purchase.

-ENDS-

Notes for editors

1. Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. For more information visit www.historic-scotland.gov.uk
2. Mavisbank was an architectural collaboration between Sir John Clerk of Penicuik and his architect William Adam. Designed and built between 1723-36, it is of international importance, and is unique within its Scottish context as the seminal building of the early Enlightenment
3. The villa comprises a main block attached to two smaller buildings with curved wall enclosing a forecourt, sitting within its own carefully designed grounds. It was devastated by a fire in 1973. The structure was stabilised in the 1980's under the instruction of Historic Scotland but it remains in a roofless, derelict and deteriorating condition
4. Historic Scotland does not own the building but since 1980s has had close involvement with the site, using emergency powers under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to install scaffolding to prevent the building's collapse, erecting a security fence to prevent entry to the site and undertaking some basic occasional maintenance. Historic Scotland also owns the Policies, which are managed on very basic care and maintenance terms
5. The Mavisbank Trust was established in 2002 by the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust to work with partners and the local community to secure the restoration of Mavisbank. The Trust entered the Mavisbank project into the first series of "Restoration" in 2003, attracting enough votes to reach the UK finals.
6. In 2006, Historic Scotland commissioned an independent options appraisal from DTZ, which reported in June 2007 that any decision required to take into account three factors: public benefit; heritage benefit and opportunity cost
7. In June 2007, it was put on the World Monument Fund's global list of "100 most endangered sites"
8. The building is on the "at risk" register compiled by the Scottish Civic Trust.
9. Register for media release email alerts from www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/news. If you wish to unsubscribe at any time, please email hs.website@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or telephone on 0131 668 8603

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