

Stunt Nuts: the movie

“Based on a true story”

World-renowned stuntman, freerunner, gymnast and filmmaker Damien Walters has brought a touch of Hollywood glamour to Derby.

One of the best-known stuntmen in the business, Walters bought a site in the city centre - which has previously been used as a location for stunt work - from the local council, in 2023. And - taking one giant leap of faith - has set about transforming the former Aida Bliss factory on City Road in Derby into a multi-million-pound training academy for the ‘Stunt Nuts’ and local gymnasts.

Now, the *Jurassic World* stuntman says that while he is seeking to install a roof to make the building watertight, Derby City Council has already approved plans to convert the historic industrial site into a state-of-the-art facility featuring performance studios, a rehabilitation centre for athletes, and dedicated stunt-filming sets.

Trampolining, parkour, martial arts and dance will all run alongside the stunt rehearsal and the studio production areas. All can be accommodated at the same time, given the nature and the size of the building.

Set to become one of the best stunt venues and a leading stunt academy in the world, even more exciting for Walters, Derby (and Hollywood!) is the news that it has already played a major role in the filming of *Stuntnuts: The Movie* - an upcoming all-action film directed by Walters that’s the third film instalment in the *Kick-Ass* trilogy by Mark Millar and John Romita Jr.

Starring Matt Damon, Chris Hemsworth and Sam Rockwell - as well as a former student of Walters, Greg Townley from nearby Belper, who has made his way from being a gymnast to become a stuntman and actor - this movie is also partly based on the true story of the fluctuating fortunes of Derbyshire-born Walters’ attempt to buy, renovate and then create what he has called ‘The Foundry’.

In the movie, a group of athletes set about raising funds so that the gym where they all trained can stay open. They use their athletic and gymnastic skills to hire themselves out as stuntmen.

Many current stuntmen have helped Damien with his Derby dream. The realisation of his project to build a multi-million pound stunt academy and film studio in a former Victorian foundry has been described by Walters himself as "incredible". And Derby now has a site where movie stunts can be shot and new performers can also be trained, with Walters adding that the East Midlands city was the ideal location for the facility - as Derby was one of the only places in the world already teaching people how to do stunts.

"We have a Spider-Man stunt double here, a Doctor Strange, a Captain America, a James Bond, a Lara Croft...the amount of stunt professionals that come from Derby is incredible," he says.

And he’s confident the academy will have a multi-storey performance studios, large gym space and themed cafe in place by September of this year.

The movie itself is set to hit the big screens at the end of 2026, with a local premiere scheduled to take place in Derby in early 2027.

Visit Derby, meanwhile, is giving its full support to the project and hopes it will not only help to put the city front-and-centre of the current set-jetting tourism trend, but also offer its visitors another top attraction.

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