

Proposal for Out of the Blue Viewforth Creative Arts and Business Hub



Background

Out of the Blue (OOTB) create community: we don't just sit within it. Since 1994, OOTB have successfully established space and support to thousands of people. OOTB have purchased and established a secure asset in the form of the Out of the Blue Drill Hall in Leith, and have successfully developed other buildings to accommodate the need for creative space and activity in Edinburgh.

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Boroughmuir High School

We have an incredible opportunity to purchase and fit out a former Victorian school building which is category B listed and lies within the Marchmont Meadows & Bruntsfield Conservation Area.

Construction of the John Alexander Carfrae-designed High School commenced around 1911. The stone built building is category B listed. The main school building comprises three storeys with additional basement, mezzanine and attic floors, arranged over a double quadrangle or 'figure of 8' design. The total gross internal area of the built areas is 9,626 sq m (103,611 sq ft).



The building has been marketed for sale by the City of Edinburgh Council with considerable interest from property developers who would likely convert it into luxury flats. Out of the Blue have put in a £6.2 million bid to purchase, subject to finance.

The City of Edinburgh Council Estates department have classified our offer as a community bid, but have told us we are not the preferred bidder.

Out of the Blue would create a major resource for:

- artists studios
- multi artform classes and workshops
- theatre performances
- rehearsal spaces
- cafe
- meeting spaces
- exhibitions
- arts market
- participatory arts projects

Given the scale of the site there is also an opportunity to include converting part of the site into social housing. It is currently anticipated that some 20 houses could be created.

The return would be economic and social. (see appendix 1)

The community feel the added value of Out of the Blue's provision to the local area and the people of Edinburgh should be taken into consideration by the City of Edinburgh Council Estates Department

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in the assessment of our bid.

The Council gets a good financial return and we create living, breathing creative communities to keep the city alive.

The need for Investment in artists studios as hubs of the community

Edinburgh rides high on its creative credentials, with its' Festivals attracting many thousands of visitors each year, the arts are part of Edinburgh's DNA.

But underpinning this is Edinburgh's creative industries and artists. They share ideas and technologies, feed off each other and work together in innovative and complex ways. Artists working in studios sustain themselves through a huge range of artforms and activities. Time and again the artists working within studio hubs have been found to make valuable contributions to their community, helping make vibrant and active places.

Affordable workspace has become a key issue. As land and property values in Edinburgh rise, putting particular pressure on artists and SME's, the exodus of artists out of Edinburgh grows. Artists are victims of their own success, moving into affordable areas, contributing to the community and then being forced out with rising prices.

We risk a city filled with wonderful, world renowned institutions and buildings, but no living, breathing creative communities to keep them alive. The creative sector's makes a huge contribution to Edinburgh's vitality and economy.

The sector is largely reliant on providers operating on a not for profit or charitable basis in order to keep rents within reach. Given the ever increasing property values across Edinburgh it is clear that the market will not by itself address sustained provision, thus jeopardising this key component of Edinburgh's cultural and social vibrancy.

There is a high level of ingenuity and commitment required to work in complex and often highly innovative ways to make these spaces work.

Out of the Blue' s expertise as a social enterprise is one crucial part of the solution. Investing in the ownership and development of buildings which are retained for community benefit in perpetuity, is another.

R.Hoon (OOTB Manager) rob@outoftheblue.org.uk

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Appendix 1

It is anticipated that using the much valued model and acumen that has enabled Out of the Blue to develop the drill hall, many thousands of people will participate in the Boroughmuir arts centre and the value will be significant social benefit. Namely;

-Educational and Cultural,

- Substantial educational/ social capital networking opportunities for people living in the south of Edinburgh and beyond
- The project will enable OOTB to support over 200 artists by providing them with work space and selling opportunities, enabling them to work as artists, *and* to connect to the local community to pass their skills onto others.
- Classes and workshops for a predicted 40,000 adults, children and young people per annum who will learn new skills and gain knowledge in the arts (drama, dance etc)
- Over 20 local community groups and schools will participate in productions showcasing their skill and knowledge
- 16 young people not in education or employment will undertake an employment training programme which provides personal and social development in arts and social enterprise

-Economic,

- Employment hub for an estimated 400 people
- Estimated annual aggregate artist/organisation turnover; £5,000,000 (low waged artists to cultural industry companies)
- Income source for over 50 tutors; estimated £60,000
- Sales of work from exhibitions of £27,000 per annum (Vital income to assist artists career progression in the creative industries)
- 700 arts market stallholders estimated income of £70,000
- Community cafe estimated annual turnover: £250,000 (Prices kept affordable for local community)
- Social enterprise, social banks, Creative Scotland events to support economic development of creative industries and individuals

-Environmental,

- The conversion of the arts centre will be undertaken with an ethos of reducing carbon emissions through insulation, use of wood from sustainable forests, solar water heating, smart boiler system, energy efficient lighting, digital timers, automated cooling systems, heat



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transfer units and underfloor heating.

- OOTB will use our membership of the Green Arts Venue initiative to share ways to reduce water, gas and electricity usage, saving money and cutting waste.
- OOTB will continue to be visited by organisations from throughout the world who we advise on our approach to environmental sustainability

-Social, and health benefits.

- Being able to engage in creative activity as employment or as leisure activity is proven boost for individuals mental health and for the health and wellbeing of the community
- classes improve fitness of mind and body e.g. capoeira/ dance/ drama/ aerial/ theatre
- Community Cafe will provide nutritious food –low fat, prepared on premises, supporting all events and running as a training project for hard to reach young people with mental health challenges from the local community

Appendix 2

OOTB have a studio waiting list of over 200 artists and due to the imminent development of buildings we lease in Portobello are about to relinquish 50 artists studios and practice space.

OOTB have initiated a huge variety of projects for community involvement including, a project to regenerate the local park; working with young people at risk, local schools, older people and artists to revisualise and recreate a vital local resource, with new play, sport equipment and landscaping. Running a cafe training project to work with the hardest to reach young people to introduce them to useful life skills and experience in running a social enterprise as a resource for the community. Engaging young people in arts projects which results in their voices being heard through performance and exhibition. All the elements of Out of the Blue combine to make our work greater than the sum of the parts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Out of the Blue (OOTB) is registered as a charity with HM Revenue and Customs and with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. OOTB is also registered as a company limited by guarantee and operates as a social enterprise.

The Trustees, who are also directors for the purpose of company law are:

John Molleson (Chairperson)
Carena Brogan
Mike Davidson
Philip Denning (Company Secretary)
Roland Reid
Gregor Mair

Organisational Structure

OOTB staff and Board have a wealth of experience and track record in organisational governance and management, financial management, marketing, administration, building development and



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management, artists support, education and training, community development, cultural planning, café management, arts project development, arts and music.

Objects and Activities

Out of the Blue Arts & Education Trust's object and its principal activity is that of providing comprehensive educational and recreational opportunities for the promotion of the arts. The opportunities are numerous and cover a wide range of art including music and dance.

From inception OOTB's mission has been to provide opportunities for artists and other people who face barriers to creativity, to meet, work, participate, enjoy themselves, learn and develop skills and knowledge. OOTB has established a reputation as an independent, dynamic and innovative cultural social enterprise. OOTB is one of Scotland's leading community, cultural and arts development organisations working in partnership to provide economic, cultural, social and educational opportunities, to a significant number of people to make a real difference to their lives.

Mission/Aim

Out of the Blue aims to:

- provide opportunities for people to work, participate, learn and develop skills and knowledge, meet and work together, share and learn skills
- provide opportunities for artists to share their skills and knowledge with people who often face barriers to participating in the arts
- provide opportunities for participation in creative initiatives and artistic projects

OOTB fulfills these aims

- by providing accessible and inspiring space for studio based artists and for those who participate in and are an audience for arts activities
- by providing access for those in the local community to the highest quality arts and creative projects
- by promoting and demonstrating the regenerative power of the arts in partnership with individuals and organisations

Vision/Objectives

OOTB sees as its objectives:

- to establish OOTB as an integral and sustainable part of a creative community that seeks out and promotes involvement in ambitious and innovative arts projects,
- to work in close collaboration with artists and other organisations throughout the city and develop OOTB as a breeding ground for new ideas and connections, thereby widening access to participation in the arts,
- to anchor OOTB in the local community, providing cultural and creative experiences for a significant number of people to make a real difference in their lives.

OOTB seek to fulfil these objectives by:



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- continuing to preserve and develop its listed premises (the Drill Hall) as a centre for excellence in the arts and a focus for community involvement;
- continuing the development of the OOTB café as the hub of the Drill Hall in offering healthy, affordable food and drink and a training project for young people and others not in education or employment;
- further developing activity of economic, cultural, educational, health and environmental value;
- securing financial stability and organisational sustainability.

OOTB create jobs and opportunities as a social enterprise financed through trading, investment and loans. OOTB has established a reputation as a dynamic and innovative community and arts development organisation.

OOTB is one of Scotland's leading community, cultural and arts development organisations.

OOTB is a major part of the infrastructure in Edinburgh's creative economy.

OOTB is a Development Trust

OOTB is one of Scotland's leading Social Enterprises (and were awarded a Social Enterprise Mark in 2010)

OOTB support ranges from:

- studio /work space provision,
- creative spaces for rehearsing and teaching
- marketplaces for distribution and exchange of creative products and ideas
- promotion and production of cultural and creative projects and events to support a climate of cultural and educational opportunity
- advice to other cultural space generator organisations

Since the need for an artists' hub to support emerging artists was identified in 1994, OOTB have successfully established space and support to hundreds of artists. Having established a secure asset in the form of the Out of the Blue Drill Hall, OOTB is utilising this to initiate and develop other spaces to accommodate artists in Edinburgh.

Drill Hall Refurbishment, Repair and Renovation

OOTB purchased, repaired and refurbished the drill hall in 3 phases utilising grants and loans from:

- The Scottish Government
- Triodos Bank
- Social Investment Scotland
- The Scottish Arts Council,
- Scottish Enterprise,
- Communities Scotland,
- The Big Lottery,
- Historic Scotland,
- City of Edinburgh Council,
- Fresh Futures.
- Climate Challenge Fund
- WREN
- CARES

OOTB has transformed the Drill Hall into a centre for participatory arts for the benefit of the local and



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artistic communities using best practice with regard to environmental sustainable materials and processes.

The design work has been acclaimed for its quality of design, build standard and environmental sustainability.

The studio and workshop spaces are heavily insulated and an array of solar tubes have been installed to provide the Drill Hall's hot water.

OOTB provides a mix of flexible spaces for cultural activity:

- Studio
- Office
- Café
- Exhibition /gallery
- Performance
- Rehearsal
- Workshop
- Conference/ meeting
- Music practice
- Garden

The economic, social, educational, environmental and cultural value of OOTB's achievements have been recorded and recognised for their excellence from local, national and international perspectives.

Timeline of Achievements and Performance

From 1994 to the present, OOTB has grown to become a significant provider of studio and creative industry business space in Edinburgh.

1994 OOTB Established in a shop in Blackfriars Street, Edinburgh

1996 OOTB converted a near derelict bus garage offices into an arts centre in New Street, a neglected part of Edinburgh's Old Town. The OOTB initiated and established the Bongo Club for the Edinburgh Festival and all year round performance venue. During the course of OOTB's tenure, New Street studios provided a workplace for hundreds of artists and organisations, and brought thousands of people to see hundreds of live performances and DJ sets at the Bongo Club. OOTB New Street continued to provide studio and creative industry business spaces until its demolition in 2006.

2002 OOTB obtained significant loan finance to enable the purchase of a drill hall in Dalmeny Street, Leith. Obtained change of use planning permission and listed building approval for its development as an arts centre and resource for people living in the local area.

2003 The Bongo Club relocated to premises leased from Edinburgh University.

2003 Completion of Phase 1 refurbishment of the OOTB Drill Hall and the provision of 37 studio spaces

2006 Established OOTB 'PowerHouse' in Portobello providing studio and creative industry business spaces. This former office building is leased by OOTB from BL Developments. OOTB are negotiating



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the purchase of a purpose built studio complex on the site, once built. It currently houses 45 artists.

2007 Completion of phase 2 refurbishment of the OOTB Drill Hall. Creation of 14 new studios, OOTB Drill Hall café, rehearsal space, and exhibition space.

2009 Established the Drill Hall cafe training scheme

2010 Completion of phase 3 refurbishment of the OOTB Drill Hall

2011 The lease and management of an additional studio and rehearsal space in Portobello '10C-The Arts Factory'

2012 Consolidated and developed income streams during general economic downturn

2013/14

Maintained full occupancy of studio spaces. OOTB house 206 artists in 132 studios in The OOTB Drill Hall, The Portobello 'Powerhouse', The Portobello 'Arts Factory' and 'Portobello Lane'

Received funding support from Heritage Lottery Fund for the future 'Gretna 100' project. Received significant funding support from Creative Scotland for the future 'Youth Arts Hive' multi-arts activity for young people, working with 11 partner organisations.

Received funding support from the Big Lottery for the Wiff Waff Celebrate project.

Consolidated Organisational Development

OOTB have established a national reputation as an exemplary Social Enterprise; generating a significant amount of earned income which is invested for social benefit. The value of the interrelated services we currently provide and the income associated with this is the basis of our business development plans.

Plans for the Future - Extending our Social Impacts

Cultural Activity and Services

To consolidate the track record of OOTB, which has consistently provided the opportunities for the integration of people, art forms and spaces. Our future development will prioritise the initiation of significant partnership projects and the provision of cultural space in a safe, supportive and stigma free environment. The current strategic priority is for OOTB to continue to host and initiate projects in enhanced facilities. In tandem with this as a cultural regeneration project, we are having a fundamental impact on the areas we work in, creating opportunities through a participatory approach to creativity, economic activity, education, training and area renewal.

OOTB have been awarded funding from Creative Scotland in support of the National Youth Arts Strategy (2014-2016) towards the cost of enabling a programme to develop a hive of networked and staged multi-arts activity for young people. ('The Creative Mix- Youth Arts Hive') The project will work with 11 partner organisations, with a target to engage 500 participating young people, including 12 trainees/apprentices.

Cultural and Economic Regeneration

Over the next year OOTB will contribute significantly to the regeneration of the local area by:

- Providing workspace for studio artists and cultural industry businesses



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- Giving thousands of opportunities for people to utilise the workshop, exhibition, café, performance and rehearsal areas.
- Developing project work utilising spaces and networks
- Collaborative work between the 11 Youth Arts Hive arts organisation partners to share expertise, and project development

Additional support for the Creative Industries OOTB host visits by many arts, development trusts and social enterprise organisations to utilise our experience and expertise in arts asset based regeneration, and social enterprise.