

**Arts group awarded two major Lottery grants to  
develop the Drill Hall Art Space in Leith, Edinburgh.**

**Out of the Blue Arts & Education Trust are a major step closer to creating a custom-built, fully accessible arts space inside the former army Drill Hall with 2 further Lottery awards of £189,000 via *The Scottish Arts Council* and £90,000 from *The New Opportunities Fund*.**

The **B-Listed Drill Hall** is a stunning Victorian building with vast proportions and a glass roof. There are many idiosyncratic features from the military times such as the firing range which only add to the potential for a creative public space in an area of the city with little cultural provision.

**Architects Ciao** (*City Architecture Office Ltd*) won a competition to re-design the space. Their design takes inspiration from monastic and souk patterns, reminiscent of a North African village in its sequence of internal courtyards, cellular rooms and communal areas. The plans incorporate artists studios, offices, exhibition space, workshops, rehearsal spaces, conference facilities, café, crèche and a studio theatre.

The latest Lottery award of **£189,000** is a further contribution towards the target total of £800,000 - which allows phase 2 (of 3) to be completed. The result is fully accessible new facilities and more room to accommodate the x artists on the waiting list using environmentally sustainable material & systems including renewable energy; solar panels & wind turbines.

[The Lottery previously granted an initial **£100,000** in 2003 for Phase 1 - the basic upgrading to change the use of the Drill Hall. Over the past year over 50 artists & arts organisations have taken up residency in this unique building, the layout of the space as the army had used it]

In the recent property boom, artists in Edinburgh have been squeezed out of the market and the demand for affordable space has increased tenfold. Out of the Blue provide space for over 100 artists & arts organisations and this latest award should increase the capacity by 50%. However this doesn't nearly satisfy the still enormous demand for art space in the city.

Building work is scheduled to begin in Autumn 2005, but cannot be completed without further investment.

**One year ago** *Out of the Blue* took an unorthodox step and purchased the former army drill hall from the Ministry of Defence as a charitable trust using a commercial mortgage. Significant loans are generally unheard of in the voluntary sector, but *Triodos* Bank saw the value of the building to the Scottish arts community. A complete turn around for the organisation whose previous situation, at the former bus garage at New St, was constantly threatened with closure from developers waiting to demolish the arts complex to build a luxury hotel.

*Out of the Blue* still runs the grass roots 38-studio complex at New St, one of the only remaining affordable city centre space for artists to work in (until the imminent day, a 5 star hotel takes it's place). *The Bongo Club*, *Out of the Blue's* trading arm - is now firmly placed on Holyrood Road in Edinburgh University's Moray House.