

RESISTANCE and RECONCILIATION

The Wall started in January 2012 when Islington Mill approached me to do a collaborative project. I threw out a few ideas, one of which was to move a brick wall. Astoundingly, they said let's do it. We'd thought of it more as a guerrilla action then, a paean to rave, to be done and dusted that summer.

The backdrop for the work was twofold. The 2011 riots were fresh in memory, as I arrived up North from London for a 3-month residency looking for the legacy of the Hacienda. It seemed clear what the riots were about, as a collective expression. What didn't make sense was the liberal mainstream media's, let alone the government's, response. As I immersed myself in the DIY scene then and past, and tried to make pilgrimage to the Hacienda, The Kitchen, Thunderdome and other Madchester temples (all demolished, except for the building which housed Conspiracy), something else emerged. It had everything to do with the riots.



25 March 2015

The building that was the Hacienda was demolished in 2000. The nightclub closed three years before. I've often been told not to romanticise that time, of Manchester especially in the 1990's – the years of enduring violence that pervaded and ultimately ended it all. It is a violence rooted in dispossession, borne of the edges but which took hold of the city centre, that preceded and perhaps sped the wave of demolition and dispersal i.e. urban regeneration to take place in areas of Manchester, Salford and in other parts of the North West. By many accounts, in these areas it's undeniably safer now. But it allowed for another kind of violence to take its place.

The Wall was conceived by the merging of two summers, of 1989 and 2011 – of two mass youth 'movements', the summers of love and riots. Times of uncanny similarity in their social and political situations. But the chasm of difference in what they expressed begged the question of, what had changed?



4 September 2014

JEN WU *thewallmustberebuilt.org*



30 October 2014

It was announced in December 2014 that Manchester is getting a new £78 million art centre, to be called The Factory, in homage to Factory Records and by inference Greater Manchester's industrial labouring past; in other words, its ghosts. It is to be, amongst other things, a permanent home for the Manchester International Festival. A twenty-minute walk away, at the site of the original Factory club nights (aka The Russell Club/PSV, also demolished), there is, in the ward of Hulme (as well as neighbouring wards Moss Side and Longsight), nearly 50% of children living in poverty. To put the figures in another perspective, it was announced one month earlier Salford City Council had to cut a debilitating £55 million from its 2015-17 budgets, resulting in the discontinuation of several essential social services, especially for the city's most vulnerable.



Vincent Dugdale with his Hacienda membership card. Vin is an ex-psychiatric nurse from Ancoats (now living in Oldham) who was also a drummer in a punk band in the '70s. He's also pretty much single-handedly kept the project alive for the last 5 months. He supports City. 22 October 2014

Looking for 1989 through the lens of 2011, what emerged is a trajectory – encapsulated by the demolition of the Hacienda and the construction of luxury apartments, built with its name – Hacienda Apartments – on top of its former site. It forebodes what was to happen in large areas of the North West through the Pathfinder scheme (originally intended to run 2002-18). Whole neighbourhoods were demolished, their communities forcibly evicted, with the aim of building these areas afresh. The scheme was met with substantial resistance from its inception. By 2007, £2.2 billion of public money had been spent, with "no evidence that anything has been achieved in terms of higher house prices or quality of life for the communities involved." The scheme was discontinued in 2011, still with swathes of streets emptied, partially demolished and derelict, or in the case of Pathfinder's flagship development – Chimney Pot Park in Salford – started, but for years left unfinished.

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Chimney Pot Park was started as an Urban Splash/Tom Bloxham development. The land was given for free, in return for delivering the project (aided by Pathfinder's public funds). When Pathfinder ceased, so too did Urban Splash's commitment. The unfinished properties were boarded up, with hoarding and barbed wire erected around the area, accumulating graffiti for three years until the Council found another developer and terminated Urban Splash's contract. Of the homes that were built, the average price was £120,000 – three times what was considered affordable housing at the time. Urban Splash was given 16 awards for the development, and in 2014 – after three years of abandonment – was still receiving accolades.



18 August 2014. Photo Pam Van Damned Visuals

In 2001, Urban Splash bought the Grade II listed Ardwick & Ancoats Dispensary (it's said for £1) as part of a wider scheme to regenerate Ancoats as New Islington. The building lay in neglect for nearly a decade as residents in the surrounding area were relocated, their homes demolished and turned into wasteland for future private development. The attention the Dispensary finally received was to have its roof torn off, plunging it into a state of disrepair so severe as to justify Urban Splash's application for its demolition. A grassroots initiative immediately formed to save the Dispensary, now the last architectural vestige of old Ancoats, opposing the demolition with proposals to restore the hospital as a community space. A three year battle ensued. In late March 2015, in the 11th hour of a fundraising appeal, the Ancoats Dispensary Trust successfully raised enough money to obtain a Heritage Lottery grant securing the building's future.



Potluck dinner during height of the noise complaints, with Islington Mill and residents of Islington Estate. 6 August 2014. Photo Liam Howard



Verity Gardner 1 April 2014. Robert Hope with brick 409. Bob is a Salford-based building contractor / specialist bricklayer and has been involved since June 2012 – not only as a contractor but also helping to shape *The Wall* as it might be for Salford. 10 March 2014

Urban Splash is also behind the controversial redevelopment of Park Hill, Sheffield (dubbed in 2011 as 'class cleansing'). Tom Bloxham is chairman of Manchester International Festival.



10 March 2014 Photo Liam Howard. 6 March 2014.

These aren't the immediate contexts nor histories of *The [Salford] Wall*. When I initiated the work, I had no idea about Pathfinder, Chimney Pot Park or Ancoats Dispensary. Barton Moss hadn't yet happened, nor the mounting evidence of years of abuse of the public state for private gain. I didn't know about the Battle of Bexley Square, the origins of the Old Bank Theatre as the Royal Liver Friendly Society, about means test suicides or Salford in 1930. I never imagined I would play a role in the regeneration of the area or narrate part of its history, that these endeavours could potentially grow to become a permanent part; or that I would intervene on behalf of a local shopkeeper, mediate amidst local tensions, or become friends with a group of young teenage lads, doing my best to create a space for them to grow and just be. I never knew so many people of such incredible spirit and generosity. I never thought I'd become a community artist, or even part of a community. I never thought I'd be running a construction site, or changing the mind of a city council about one of its buildings. I never knew I had the capacity to defend what I felt was right, even if it put me in jeopardy – that I could do it again and again and again. All I wanted to do was to throw a rave and maybe have it mean something.



4 March 2014 Photo David Williams. 28 February 2014.



13 September 2013. 11 September 2013 Photo A.P Macarte. 3 March 2013