

PROJECT SHEET



Project: Band On The Wall
Client: Inner City Music
Value: £3.5m



City Build was appointed by Inner City Music Limited - the charity behind Manchester's iconic Band on the Wall - to deliver a transformative £3.5 million refurbishment and expansion of the legendary venue. Situated on the edge of Manchester's Northern Quarter, Band on the Wall has been a cornerstone of the city's music scene for nearly two centuries. This ambitious redevelopment aimed to preserve its rich heritage while futureproofing the venue for generations of artists and audiences to come.



The project, completed between November 2020 and March 2022, focused on expanding the venue's footprint and enhancing its facilities to support both performance and education. At the heart of the refurbishment was the sensitive restoration and incorporation of the neighbouring derelict Coccozza building - one of the few surviving remnants of

Manchester's Victorian Smithfield Market. Its distinctive High Victorian Gothic façade was retained and meticulously restored, preserving a vital piece of the city's architectural and cultural history.

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Internally, the refurbished space has significantly improved the venue's offering. The main auditorium capacity has been increased from 340 to 520, enabling Band on the Wall to welcome larger headline acts. A new ground floor performance space with capacity for 80 people has been added, offering a platform for emerging and local talent, and a newly reimagined Picturehouse Bar now includes an external terrace, daytime café use, and a second stage for intimate performances.

In addition to performance space, the redevelopment has created a hub for creative learning. An entire new floor is now dedicated to Band on the Wall's acclaimed World of Music programme. This includes a rooftop A/V suite, rehearsal and recording spaces, and improved archive facilities to house the venue's vast collection of historical materials - many of which are now on display in the Picturehouse Bar. These facilities allow young people and community groups to engage with digital content creation and collaborate with international artists.



One of the most complex elements of the refurbishment was the integration of three interconnected 19th-century buildings, each with varying floor levels and architectural constraints. City Build worked closely with the design team to overcome these challenges, ensuring that all public and back-of-house areas achieved full level access, without compromising the character of the historic spaces. Despite the intricacies of the existing structures, circulation and accessibility were improved throughout the venue.



Externally, large-format digital screens have been introduced as part of the façade, providing a public-facing digital canvas for artist-led content, community engagement, and showcasing the venue's evolving story. These new elements complement the preserved heritage fabric while signalling the building's contemporary purpose.

Funded by Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this refurbishment has allowed Band on the Wall to strengthen its role as a vital community and cultural asset. This transformation has cemented Band on the Wall's place not just as a live music venue, but as a dynamic hub for creative development, education, and cultural exchange in Manchester and beyond.