Transcript: Inclusive Spaces: Housing Inequality and Heritage

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

Inclusive Spaces, housing, built environment

**SPEAKERS**

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**EVA BRANSCOME:** Okay. Hi, thank you for joining today. Welcome to Inclusive Spaces seminar series here at The Bartlett, the Faculty of the Built Environment at UCL.

So I'm Eva Branscome, an associate professor at The Bartlett School of Architecture. I'm delighted to be chairing the session today. Inclusive Spaces is a monthly online events spaces led by The Bartlett equality, equity and inclusion group, the EDI group, and within this programme, we explore disability, race, gender, LGBTQ + and many other dimensions of diversity. And in our sessions, we discover how they intersect with built environments globally. Our topic in this January edition is about housing inequality and heritage and the embedded structural problems within the built environment. This is an urgent issue and I'm really passionate about this. So it is really wonderful to see so many of you joining us today and just a few housekeeping details before we actually begin:

So just to let you know that the session will be recorded and added to the faculty's YouTube channel as well as to the EDI website and it will also be forwarded to all people who are registered to attend today. This session is captioned live by a professional captioner and if you wish to view the captions on a separate browser window, please, click in the link shared in the chat. In the first half of the session, we will be hearing the presentations by our panellists. So welcome in on your screens the first person is Priya Aggarwal Shah and she is the founder and director of BAME In Property, welcome. The second presentation will be by myself and my work in public engagement as an academic with the SPID Theatre company and so I'll give the second presentation and finally, we'll have Naomi Israel, who is a cochair at the SPID Theatre Company and who will be telling us how this will be -- how the SPID Theatre Company works from the side of the young people.

And it's a real pleasure to welcome all of you today. In this event, together we will explore the role that architecture, planning and public engagement can play in addressing racial inequalities and differences in housing and living arrangements across ethnic communities. And we'll hear from BAME In Property, an organisation that advocates for change of the built environment sector, BAME in property's work considers diversity in design needs, layouts and language translation through engagement with community and ethnic minority leaders. Then we will present the work of the community theatre group SPID, which stands for Social, Progressive, Interconnected, Diverse.

And SPID provides training to young people from north Kensington in London using cultural and artistic activities in order to empower them to interpret and better understand their own urban environments and following this, these presentations, we will begin the Q&A, and open up the discussion for you to participate in as the audience. Do please submit questions at any point in the event by clicking on the Q&A if you can at the bottom of your screen and then we will end the programme promptly at two p.m.

So with no more delays, let's get delayed, Priya, over to you! Please, can you start to share your screen let's hear about BAME In Property first.

**PRIYA AGGARWAL SHAH:** Thank you so much for that introduction. Good afternoon everyone, pleased to be here. I'll just share my screen. Hopefully everyone can see my screen. Just a little bit about BAME In Property, this is an organisation to help bring more ethnic diversity to the property and planning sectors, it started off as a networking organisation and over the last two and a half years we've been offering a range of services including job advertising, EDI consultancy, we do community engagement through a culturally sensitive lens and we also still continue to hold workshops and events as well.

For the purpose of this particular seminar, we will be looking at data, census data and really just trying to understand why it's so important to understand what is around us in society to ensure that we have better policy and better inputs. So I would like to first start by sharing some key findings from the 2021 census regarding ethnic ty and religion. So this is something that I've been following for quite some time since the data has been published by the ONS and there's been some really, really astonishing findings.

So we've seen some huge changes over the last ten or 11 years and one of them is that one in six people living in England and Wales were born outside of the UK, which is a huge increase of 2.5 million since 2011, and I think this just goes to show that we really do have a changing face of England and Wales, which is where the census took place.

The other sort of data which is really, really changed is that the proportion of nonwhite people has now risen to 18.3 percent in England and Wales. This was ^ 14 percent ^ the Chicago in 2011 when the last census took place. So, again, you know, we are seeing more ethnic minority communities all across the UK and in particular, London, just under two-thirds of people identify with an ethnic minority group and in 2011, this figure was around 41 percent. We've already known that London is already a melting pot of diversity, huge multiculturalism everywhere that you go, from harrow to hackney and all these different areas, hugely diverse but I think that this census data just confirms that.

And outside of London, we've already got other cities where the ethnic minority population is now in the majority. So the ethnic minority population is around 60 percent in Leicester, a large part of this population is because of the east African Asians that were expelled from Uganda in the 1970s, quite a lot of them came to Leicester, settled there, built up their businesses and now in 2023 now, we've got, you know, a population in Leicester which is primarily south Asian. Birmingham, 51.4 percent, and this is a city where 20 years ago, seven out of ten people were white. So now we are seeing a rapid change, you know, is something to note as well. We're seeing not just huge change in the ethnic minority population but just the rate of how this is happening is also something to note as well and, finally, interestingly in the consensus, we've seen some huge changes with religion as well.

So we've seen a 5.5 million drop in the number of Christians and a 44 percent rise in the number of people following Islam. Religion and ethnicity are closely related as well, and something else for the first time in our census we have also had people sort of describe themselves with no religion as well. So I think that's also really interesting as well. We've got people who identify differently as well. This will have a huge implication on planning and engagement but also on buildings and infrastructure as well.

We're going to start seeing maybe some different religious infrastructure around us, we're going to start seeing more ethnic minority shops. In London, for example, if you look at some of the TFL tube stations, we've already got some tube stations where the language is in different languages, so look at white chapel, they've got it in Bengali, there's a huge Bangladeshi population there, go to the on the other side of London, in south hall, they've got it in Punjabi, so it goes to show that as communities become more he looked at diverse, you start to have infrastructure and social elements reflecting that diversity as well.

But really, what we need to understand is what impact this has on planning and engagement. First and foremost, different cultures and communities live in different ways. So multigenerational living is particularly common in many regions in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe and we also see that phenomenon in the UK as well. So in areas where there are large Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi populations as well, they do tend to live in larger populations but they don't necessarily have larger homes, so if you look at local plan, there's normally an allocation for the number of houses but that doesn't necessarily meet how big families are, so that's something that we need to start considering, local planning, planning inspectors will also need to start thinking about as well.

New builds don't always accommodate larger families due to their size and cost. I think one of the thing that I've noticed certainly when looking at new builds is that they're always that little bit smaller. They tend to get smaller but they are more expensive nowadays and a lot of them don't come with gardens, especially if they're flats and if you do want to buy a new build house, they're hugely, hugely expensive. So, again, they don't necessarily meet the housing demands of what we need today. Some new builds have design features which don't necessarily -- which aren't necessarily desirable for some ethnic minority communities, such as an open plan kitchen.

Some people would rather have at least sliding doors between their kitchen and living area to prevent odours going around the house quicker. There can be issues with the way that the bathrooms are set out, there needs to be separate female and male areas, in some communities, the toilet or the bathroom needs to be facing in certain directions. All of these things will now need to start being considered within planning and engagement.

And our current retirement living doesn't always suit ethnic minority communities. We've got lots of retirement living across the country, we've an aging population, we're going to need more retirement living homes but one of the reasons why multigenerational living is so common in this country amongst ethnic minority communities is because the retirement living tends to be suited primarily for sort of white British needs, so there might not be a Halal kitchen or options offered in a retirement living complex, there might not be vegetarian options, there may not be carers who speak different languages. All of these different things have to be considered when you are thinking about whether older people should be in retirement living complexes.

So over time, we will need to start thinking about how we diversify our retirement living homes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of different communities as well.

But to ensure that we have culturally sensitive homes and engagement approach, we first need to understand the challenges that ethnic minority communities face with housing.

And this brings me to the circle of inequalities. And as you can see, in this circle, we've got in the middle, structural racism and inequalities pretty much underpins everything, whether you are looking at housing or health but all of these different areas, home ownership, shared ownership, access to finance, multigenerational housing, overcrowding, exposure to pollution and homelessness, if you are from an ethnic minority community, you're likely to experience all of these issues far more than if you are white British.

Now, of course, there is the added layer of class and, you know, if you add class and race together, you are facing sort of double barriers, double prejudices, but just to go into some of these into more detail, so interestingly, in the UK it is actually Indians which have the highest level of home ownership at around 70, 70 odd percent, then it's followed by white British, black people have the lowest number of home ownership when it comes to being able to get on to the ladder. And I think one of the biggest challenges is access to finance.

So, you know, some black people have found that trying to access finance has been more challenging than their white counterparts when it's come to viewing homes, there has been some sort of prejudice against them. So we know that that racism doesn't like exists. Only this week there was a news beat report that showed that black people were being rejected when it came to renting as well. There's definitely issue when it comes to housing. When it comes to access to finance, some communities have certain religious restrictions as well, so in some Muslim communities, they have to have Islamic finance, which means that they can't have that interest attached to it. As we have seen from the census data, we have seen a huge increase in the number of individuals identifying with Islam, so are we going to need more Islamic finance options. When it comes to multigenerational living, this is where -- you've got grad parents, children, aunts, uncles, all living in the same household, there can be huge benefits to this. There can be that transferring of knowledge and of wisdom and that kind of language which is fantastic. It is not always an unpleasant experience. In fact, it can actually be quite a nice experience, where multigenerational living really came into the forefront was during the COVID-19 pandemic, where we saw that it was quite difficult to actually isolate different generations, there might have been challenges with broadband because more people were working from home and it can also be challenging to have your private space as well when you're living with so many different family members in the household.

And obviously, you know, multigenerational living can lead to overcrowding, where it's not done by choice but out of force because you aren't able to attain a larger home or your children aren't able to move out and overcrowding as we know has huge implications as well.

The exposure to pollution is a really interesting one because where you live is just as important as how you live. We've seen over the last few years that being exposed to poor air quality can have a huge impact on your health, even leading to death in the case of Ella Deborah who died because she was exposed to really poor air quality. But also, you know, poor housing can be in the sense of mould and as we know, again, in the news, there was the two-year old child who died because of module in his household and this is more apparent within shared ownership and within sort of social housing, underpinning all of these challenges is that there is one common feature is that most of these communities are ethnic minority, and even more than that, most of them are black.

So if you are black, not only do you have sort of some unfortunate chances when it comes to obtaining your own home, but our also exposed to issues like overcrowding, to health issues, and to potentially even homelessness as well.

So statistics have shown that black people back in 2011 only made up 3 percent of the population but made up 14 percent of all homelessness stats.

So this just goes to show that all of these different areas are completely intertwined, you cannot think about housing without thinking about health, and without thinking about racism, which completely underpins all of this.

So how can you make a difference? I just wanted to touch upon a few of these. This is what I call my tree which, you know, has all these roots, and all these different branches leading on to different solutions and suggestions, underpinning all of these is diversity and inclusion, which is really what should be guiding your overall strategy for reducing housing inequalities. First and foremost, engaging with different demographics, how many times have you gone to a public consultation if you work in this space and you tend to get, you know, a sort of similar demographic coming most of the time, the over 50s, they're saying, not in my backyard, your classic NIMBYs saying, why are you building homes over here, but have we actually thought about the fact that we probably need to be engaging with a younger audience, those struggling to get on to the housing ladder, those who need a home, those who have some different priorities, so we probably need to be thinking about not just engaging with different demographics but also diversification how we are engaging with them.

So no longer are we going to just have town hall events but we need to start thinking about online engagement, you know, doing it on social media as well, where we have a much younger demographic, TikTok has seen a surge in the number of people who are promoting different things but it's clearly a platform to reach out to a different audience. Recruitment of local representatives. This is really important because you need local advocates who can really speak on your behalf and really promote what you're going to do and what you're trying to advocate as well. I think, finding people who do believe in what you're doing, particularly younger people who can then go around and say, we think we need new housing in this area, we need some different options and tenures, we think it's important that you get on board, and that's another way of getting people on side.

Culturally sensitive and accessible community engagement is also really important. I just talked about online engagement. Online engagement is really important to be reaching perhaps a younger audience but that doesn't mean that you lose that face-to-face option, face-to-face will always be really, really important for an audience that isn't online, that doesn't have access to the Internet, or just, you know, needs to have that face-to-face interaction and nothing can really be replaced when you speak to someone, you bring them on side, and you have that interaction with them.

Culturally sensitive is knowing different people's needs, so if you are going into an area where it's a primarily Jewish population, you know that you may want to avoid holding public engagement on a Friday evening or a Saturday because of Sabbath. If you go into a Muslim area, again, you may want to think about, you know, do you need to separate male and female if that is the preference? One of the ways of being culturally sensitive is by liaising and engaging with local community leaders or with religious leaders, actually going and being a bit slower with your approach and actually understanding through these local leaders, you know, what is it that the community wants, how is it best to engage with them, learning from the experts.

Not actually assuming anything but listening to what local people have to say.

Inclusive and culturally mindful design. So I spoke earlier of the need for thinking about design adaptations because of our changing population. Well, this is where you have to start thinking about it in the planning and design of your buildings as well, and actually having design workshops, where you are getting views from different communities, especially ethnic communities, and you're asking them, what are your priorities, what would you like to see in the design of homes, do we need to be having these sliding doors between the kitchen and the living area and this is not about inconveniencing developers, but this is actually about bringing in, you know, modifications into buildings which might actually be desirable for quite a large population I would assume that having sliding doors between your kitchen and living area might be a feature that many more communities want, not just south Asian communities. Supplier and partnership diversity is also really important.

Especially when it comes to sort of working in local areas, you might want to consider working with local constructions warks who know the area really, really well, you might want to think about who you partner with when it comes to your CSR and your social value as well, because, again, that can give you an indication as to what's important. And diversification your marketing. If you want to attract different people and different demographics to your engagement and to get involved, you need to speak to this audience. Your vibe attracts your tribe, after all, and you need to make sure that you have got people who look like the people when you want to to have coming along to your events, or having engagement with you.

So these are just some of the things that we can do, we will be talking about these more during the Q&A session, and during the discussion, but I just wanted to leave you with this to see what else we might want to explore in this space. And that's me finished. Thank you, and I'll pass it back to Eva.

**EVA:** Well, thank you so much, Priya, that was really fascinating, and really, really important. That was so insightful and to have these actual facts there, and not just people's, you know, kind of impressions, do please submit any questions you might have in the Q&A. And we will then answer them following on from the presentations.

So I'm next with my presentation about my work as an academic with the SPID Theatre Company in North Kensington and I will start sharing my screen.

I hope you see that okay. Just to explain, who SPID is, so SPID Theatre Company is based out of the former community room in the great two star listed housing estate in north Kensington, and the group moved into this abandoned space in 2005. Over the years, SPID have turned a damp, cold, and basic facility into a vibrant community hub and the programmes are funded and supported by the heritage lottery fund, the BBC children in need, the mayor of London, Arts Council England, Historic England, and the targeted prevention team and more groups, and this makes it possible for SPID to develop their programme with experts in their field, such as from the British library, VNA, and also made possible my own involvement. The value of this initiative is a community hub has earned SPID the status of an asset of community value.

Since 2012, I've been running workshops, and advising on the programme of the SPID Theatre Company, devised by Nina Sampson who unfortunately can't be here today to discuss her work and her contribution.

The rooms were still very uncomfortable when I was first asked to run architecture-based workshops for young people, and the age span ranged from 13 to 25, so quite large.

And this work is important for me personally, in terms of winding the outreach of architectural education, to underrepresented groups, and giving them an understanding about their city, and enabling through this also pride in the environments that they inhabit.

I'm very interested in housing injustice, and how we can better understand this through the history of their architectural environments, and also the role that heritage and regeneration play.

From the start, this collaboration SPID has intersected with my research and teaching here at The Bartlett and my research and writing concentrates particularly on the intersection of architecture and media, such as exhibitions and publications and photography as well as museum architecture as a cultural and urban hinge and driver for regeneration.

These topics intersect with my extensive experience in British architectural heritage. I have spent almost a decade as a caseworker for the twentieth Century Society, this heritage group. And more than 50 individual buildings and larger sites have been listed due to my work as a caseworker in heritage activist, and you can see some of my cases here on the screen.

And so it was through my link with heritage that I became involved in the work of the SPID Theatre Company, as public engagement, and they're based here at the Kensal House. Although architecture is an integral part of human experience, its pedestrian Goej as discussed in universities or by specialist groups like the twentieth century society offers little access to frameworks that might also allow diverse groups of young people a better understanding of their own built urban environment and helping them through this to empower them to sit wait and orient their diverse identities. To counteract this deficiency, the SPID Theatre Company in north Kensington have run a programme of workshops using the context of twentieth century social housing estates as their workshop leader for architectural history and heritage, I have helped to underpin different outputs, ranging from site-based performances to radio shows.

In SPID's interdisciplinary programme, the young people are taught basic research skills, how to interview residents and write scripts, make films, or curate exhibitions, and how to combine all of these into site specific performance tours of significant modernist estates here in London.

So what was happening was not just learning history through architecture. The young people also were gaining very important transferrable life skills, things like how to be on time, or how to talk to people with confidence. And to be proud of their urban environment that they were starting to understand as part of the activities. To begin with, I knew very little about the area and was surprised that the nation's most affluent borough had this pocket of poverty, lack of opportunity and deprivation. Today, the gentrification of north Kensington is increasingly squeezing out social housing and the diverse demographics that live there. The SPID Theatre Company was also very concerned about the gradual but progressive social cleansing of the area through this, and then in 2017, Grenfell, the fire at Grenfell happened.

But let's go back to look at the history of this part of London. So on this slide, you can see the Charles Booth poverty map from the late 1890s and north Kensington is here and this highlighted area is larger here. I think this map is a very good in explaining the serious disparity of this living area from the earliest of time, so the yellow areas is the hill of Notting Hill, the yellow area is very affluent, it's the top class of residency inhabitation, then you can see how that area and then surrounded by sort of bright red, that's still comfortable middle class, which at the time that the map was made in the 1890s would have included several servants and staff that would work in these houses.

And then you can see that it very quickly becomes paler and fades into blue and black, and these are areas of rife deprivation and poverty. So these neighbourhoods then became developed in the 1960s as post-war slum clearance initiative. But already from the very beginning, and that's what this map shows, these communities had been identifiable as pockets of poverty due to migration and urban displacement. Grenfell Tower was part of this welfare state's rehousing programme and the designs for Grenfell Tower started in 1967 and construction went up in 1972 and the building was completed two years later. And so the tower is here but the estate is also these sort of mid-rise housing blocks.

But in the area of north Kensington there was another slum that had been a tenacious area of poverty since north Kensington was developed for housing in the mid-1800s and this area was the result of overspeculation. So we can see what happened here 100 years later in the 1950s, for example, Powell square became the heart of Peter Rachman's slum empire, and these homes were also rented out to the wind rush generation as part of the same strategy of exploitation. Then the white defence league moved into the area, and they provoked the race riots in 1958.

When the slum clearance started to change north Kensington, and also with the construction of social housing estates, the conversation movement stopped in to stop the demolition of those particular Victorian town houses in the portobello area, and soon, the area became popular among young artists as part of the counterculture movement, here you can see Jimi Hendricks who also lived in the area.

And gentrification set in by the 1980s, young professionals were attracted by the large and attractive Victorian houses that were under heritage protection, and since then, the neighbourhood has experienced a steady but unstoppable pressure on affordable housing as properties were fixed up and sold on for higher prices but you were also getting multioccupancy homes, reconsolidating as single-family homes which meant that there were less properties for rent. And then in the 1999 Roger Michelle's home, Notting Hill drew attention to the global property market, which made this even more extreme. And the Grenfell Tower fire was the result of an attempt to make it more attractive to its gentrified surroundings. I became involved in how architecture has been involved with spatial injustice in north Kensington, and how we will use its memory to move beyond it in the future. There were voters and memorial placards everywhere, and the green hearts for Grenfell were the writing on the wall, and still are today.

The topic was tough, and we realised that all of us would need to ensure that the workshops for the young people would not add to the trauma that they had experienced and then I worked hard to help the topic evolve as a well-rounded discussion, covering the many complexities of north Kensington's housing situation.

So the output of the performance was about having agency and looking forward.

And this is their neighbourhood and the young people of north Kensington should be given a tool kit to demand change.

The built environment carries great responsibilities in framing and staging social activities and reflecting underlying ideologies and power structures. So through this work with SPID, I've become increasingly interested in Grenfell Tower, the deeply ingrained inequality of the area, and the question of difficult heritage. And I've integrated this into my workshops for SPID but also my teaching at The Bartlett and my ongoing research. And you can see some of this here. Finally, I'm deeply indebted to SPID and having been able to work on their projects over the years, it's been inspiring to be able to share my enthusiasm with them by thinking about history and identity through buildings and I'm always deeply humbled to see this reworked into the beautiful and joyful site-based enactments, while the young people perform their immediate history and reality, the workshop simultaneously embed deep layers of resilience as they start to experience themselves as meaningful participants of their city, as such, my work with NINA as a creative and experimental method of public engagement is about challenging presumptions about architecture being an exclusive practice, ring fenced by privilege. Thank you.

I'm going to stop sharing my screen. Good, so, now, let's hear from Naomi, who is an active participant of SPID, yes, do you want to come on, thank you very much for turning your camera on, over to you, tell us a little bit more about, you know, who you are and how you got engaged with SPID and what this means to you.

**NAOMI ISRAEL:** Hi, I'm sorry, can you say that again because my Internet is running a bit --

**EVA:** No worries, first of all, welcome, Naomi, and just tell us a little bit more about yourself and how you became active in SPID and what it means to you to be part of these workshops.

**NAOMI:** Okay. My name is Naomi, I'm cochair of PID Theatre, I joined SPID when I was a teenager. It was -- what attracted me initially was the acting. So --

**EVA:** Their workshops.

**NAOMI:** That's what I did initially. Yes, and so it was acting that drew me to it, and the workshops was what we did the acting into it, and then I went to university, and then I came back and then Grenfell happened. And I lost friends and people I truly cared about and, well, I had more questions than answers and mainly why and how. So with the knowledge I gained from SPID in terms of understanding social housing and all the aspects that come with it, be it political, be it historical, and all the implications that happened in order for it to be the cluster that it was -- I'm trying my hardest not to swear! Yeah, that's essentially everything I learned from the workshops was -- it gave me the information to understand basically how my friends died and the series of events that led up to their death and I needed to know this because it was part of my grieving process. So that's one of the things that was really helpful for me as a young person in the community that is also in social housing. So it was empowering to understand my surroundings and my home and understand the nuances of it to be able to basically better protect the place I live in and to understand how it works because, you know, in order to play the game, you've got to know the rules.

So yeah. That was a long-winded way of answering the question.

**EVA:** Thank you very much, Naomi and, you know, you and I have met over several occasions and I'm always -- I feel with you and also going into the area of north Kensington and seeing -- still seeing the tower there and that it's now behind sort of plastic sheeting and that, you know, it's a very difficult thing to kind of try to heal while the building is still there in this situation and how -- but also when you are walking through north Kensington, it's very evident how, you know, polarised the communities there are as well and --

**NAOMI:** Yeah, hmm.

**EVA:** If you want to say something about that as well, and I don't know, kind of the role that architecture plays as well.

**NAOMI:** The polarity -- it wasn't exactly lost on me prior to Grenfell, there's a street that me and my sister would call it posh grove. It's like when you go past -- it goes towards -- that's where we have those lovely, big, Victorian homes, we called it posh grove. So it's not something that was lost on me, especially since that street is very close to Grenfell, the inequality has always been there. It's sort of a blink or you'll miss it. If you go about your life, as we do as Londoners, we are -- we got on with it, but it's only when you are really confronted with it, when you think, oh, wait, there really is a lot of inequality in this sector of the world that I live in. And it's -- I find it fascinating how, you know, the rich and the poor just coexist and go about their business, and when such a disaster happens, it shocked me just how much inequality there was, but to the degree, I was not aware, and two, just how -- we may be very different and some have privilege, some don't but it was comforting to see how everyone came together in that moment and people did what the people in power were supposed to do, which was to lead.

**EVA:** The community started to take over at that point, didn't it?

**NAOMI:** Because there was no leadership from those who should be leading, so the community came and led themselves, and it was rich or poor, privileged or non-privileged who came together, and did what needed to be done, and I loved that about my area.

**EVA:** That's really lovely to hear, Naomi, and also that even though there is such a wide disparity in north Kensington, that there is still a community feeling, that there is solidarity if something really goes wrong like that, that, you know, people come together as one regardless of what their backgrounds are, of class and race and different occupations and, you know, and where they might live within this part of London. So, yeah, okay. And I think perhaps just back to -- oh, Naomi? Yes, so I just have one last thing.

When you started working with SPID, you know, just perhaps let us know a little bit about, you know, how you feel now that you are also in a more not just somebody taking part in the workshops but also part of the organisation, how meaningful that is to you, how that works for you. That might be nice to hear.

**NAOMI:** Oh, majorly. It's majorly important for me because I'm in a position where I can advise them on how to further spread the word of SPID and how to let young people know that SPID exists, because I found it by happenstance, and I was just happy to be in the right place at the right time, and got approached, and they were like, hey, do you have this thing, do you want to join it, and I was like, yeah.

I want to reach out to young people on a wider scale and get them involved, because as I say, knowledge is power, and it's great to know these things, because if you know how things are how, and how it's run and how it's done, and how people -- and how spaces like SPID were at risk of being taken away from the community, then you're in the best place to prevent that from happening to other places. Because especially as young people, we don't have a space of our own, it's always being underfunded to the point where it can no longer be viable, and then they have an excuse to ship it away. So yeah, that's why it is so important to know these things, and to know what's out there, and also in a way, know how to fight for your rights.

And to protect what's ours, the community, because I don't know what it is, but this government loves to privatise and sell things off. So knowledge is power.

**EVA:** Yeah, yeah, and also, I think it's really important, one of the things that I was very impressed by are that the workshops are for free for the young people.

**NAOMI:** People go, they're free!

**EVA:** They don't cost anything. And people can join and just be part of it, and, you know, also become part of the community for however long they feel like it, and with you, join as a young person, and then your life moves on, you go to university, and then you come back in this other role, and it's teaching you also to take leadership, which I think is awesome.

**NAOMI:** And also, to add another thing, you learn about other people's experience within the area, because when we go, and we do -- we go and meet people in the community, and we record just their experiences within the community, because that's what we do, we fix on a property, learn about it, usually social housing and learn about it and interview the people who live within it, or around it, and then we formulate a play based on that, including the information that we have learned.

So you are also learning about, like, gaining skills in interviewing people and learning about their lives, and also making that into a play. Or a film. So yeah.

**EVA:** Okay. Good, thank you so much, Naomi, please stay with us on the screen, and I would like to invite Priya back for the Q&A and the discussion.

Is yeah, thank you so much, Naomi for this, which was really important to hear from you.

So let's start with a question for Priya. It's from Osmani, and the question is: What's your view on the overprovision of luxury flats in London?

**PRIYA:** Thank you for your question. I think I'm going to interpret that as, you know, what do we think of gentrification, all across London, what do we think of very expensive, high-rise blocks, you're thinking, you know, your nine elms with that pool in the sky, that's what we're seeing a lot more of, and I think what's happening is that we have got a lot of overseas investors who are purchasing these properties but not necessarily living in these high priced, high value luxury flats and they end up just being empty and what we have in London especially is a housing crisis where a lot of local people are being outpriced of their local areas and they're not able to afford, they're not even able to get on the housing ladder, they can't even afford shared ownership because, yes, you might be able to get a discount but it's still expensive and what we're seeing as we keep building as developers keep building more and more luxury apartments, buildings, flats, just ordinary people won't be able to get on to the housing ladder by any stretch.

So my opinion of them is we probably need to have a greater mixture of housing, I think developers tend to provide luxury buildings in a sort of block because it's a viability assessment and they need to be able to have those luxury apartments in order to then provide discounted options such as partnering with a social housing provider or to provide more affordable options, so there is a viability reason why they provide these luxury flats but we probably have too many luxury flats which are just lying empty in proportion to the number of people that actually need a home.

**EVA:** Good, yeah, thank you.

That was good and clear.

I have a comment for Naomi from Liza Fletcher who says, "Naomi, I think you are amazing and your passion result to the Grenfell disaster is very clear, as is your detection to the community there.

I'm doing a drama processional piece in Waltham Forest and would love to learn from your drama projects, et cetera, so there you go, you have a contact that -- where you can make some connections yourself and connect with other community groups. There is also a question from Skylar Smith who says, "Thank you for sharing, Naomi, how do you find the community rooms that SPID work in at Kensal house, would you prefer bigger better space or does it share the location-specific purpose?"

**NAOMI:** We're currently in the middle of a refurb, so we're making the space slightly larger and better fit for purpose not just for theatre but for the wider community, the residents of Kensal to use as well, so watch this space!

**EVA:** Good, let's see. Perhaps this one is -- oops. This one one perhaps for me, it's from Aniruddh Sharan who writes, hi, thank you for this wonderful session, I'm an architect from India, wow, and interested in working with adaptive reuse. And -- I had a question regarding it. How does one preserve the local characteristics and yet refrain from reinforcing the complicated social past inequalities that they represent? That is a very interesting and very pertinent question, and I think, you know, with kind of adaptive reuse, with keeping older buildings, we do need to start thinking about the complex histories that they embody, and their evidence for, and perhaps also contested sites, like what you were saying, you know, complicated, if you keep the building, it might through its kind of physicality also maintain complicated social pasts and inequalities and I think it's important that that this is also made very clear when a building is to be put under historic protection, or, you know, brought into a new life that the new life doesn't just ignore what the building was about in the past but actually properly engages with it so that it becomes readable, there's a certain layer in the historic environment and, I mean, I don't know, Priya, do you have something to say about that, about, you know, the continued inhabitation of buildings?

**PRIYA:** I'm actually going to flip this question right back to you, because I had seen in the Q&A a really interesting question from Alex Kearney about receptive developers which I would like to take on afterwards.

**EVA:** Go ahead, please answer that one.

**PRIYA:** Amazing, yeah, so this is a question which is asking how receptive developers and other partners have been to the recommendations of BAME In Property, is it possible to hear more about their work in this area? So I think once upon a time, developers weren't receptive to culturally sensitive engagement approaches, it was very much a case of a tick box exercise, let's get our community and our stakeholder engagement done to the bear minimum so that we can get our planning application over the line, obviously in order to submit a planning application, you need to have that statement of community involvement but in the last ten, probably even five years, we've seen a real shift in developer attitudes, where they're recognising that the communities that they're going into are incredibly diverse. They're working with more and more minority communities and they cannot turn a blind eye to different community needs and priorities.

So I think developers are certainly more open to considering different engagement approaches, certainly liaising with community and religious leaders, thinking about online engagement, that's definitely seen a resurgence, certainly during the COVID-19 pandemic, where everything went online including engagement. There were some projects that I worked on which were 100 percent online because we couldn't meet in person and it just meant that we were able to reach a much wider demographic and I just think now what we're going to see is hybrid approaches, where we will have online engagement, we will have in person events, we will have some design workshops, we will think about language translation, because we absolutely need to with the diversity of the UK and how it's shifting.

And we probably also need to think about the census data, and how this will impact future engagement strategies as well.

So I'm currently working with a housing association up north where we have to think about sort of some different approaches as well.

So I would say that developers are certainly starting to come on board, and certainly starting to adopt some of those recommendations that BAME In Property have suggested.

**EVA:** Thank you, Priya, that's really good to hear that things are starting to move in the right direction, so linking is back to your own important work.

So these were some really wonderful questions, everyone, thank you, unfortunately, you know we are running out of time and we will have to wrap up our session now.

I'll be looking through the chat at the questions and so will Priya and Naomi as well and it will be giving us a really good and very important kind of feedback for our continued thinking and our relevance and perhaps to push our own thinking in perhaps slightly different directions that we hadn't considered before. So thank you very much. So, you know, Naomi and Priya, thank you for coming along, and your insightful discussions and also thank everybody, I would like to thank everyone for coming along and joining us today.

Just one last thing to mention is that SPID will be at the British Film Institute with a film and launching their season of social change on Saturday 4th of February and as well as this, they are now signing up for free workshops starting on the 18th of March.

And the fliers are included in the chat, so do have a look if you want to be part of this, and so this concludes the session, and it's really all we have time for.

Inclusive Spaces is back next month, on Wednesday 22nd of February, celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month with the editors of Queer Spaces: An atlas of LGBTQIA+ places and stories, and colleagues from The Bartlett.

All signup details are on the Web page, and also in the chat, of course, and we definitely hope to see you back for this event as well.

Thank you so much for being part of this, Priya and Naomi, and also, thank you Alma, who has been organising this event and you have been absolutely great and so much support and also a big thanks to all of you who have come along to join us and we hope that you enjoyed the session. Have a lovely rest of the day from all of us here, and good-bye!

**PRIYA:** Thank you bye.