

Assembling Under the Westway: The Emergence of Social Infrastructure in North Kensington, London

Pablo Sendra 

The Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, London, UK, pablo.sendra@ucl.ac.uk

Toby Laurent Belson

Westway23, London, UK, kingtubz@yahoo.com

Marco Thomas Picardi

*The Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, London, UK,
marco.picardi.12@alumni.ucl.ac.uk*

Abstract: This paper explores the generative capacity of activist movements defending their community assets from commodification or closure to produce new forms of social infrastructure. We explore this through the case study of activism along the Westway, a motorway in West London. The area has a strong tradition of community activism, particularly in the 1960s and the 2010s. Through a Participatory Action Research approach, we elaborate a historical account of the formation of social infrastructure under the Westway and surrounding spaces. In doing so, we develop a framework—processes, alliances, and capacities—to understand how communities and activist groups contesting the loss of community spaces can generate new forms of social infrastructure—both physical spaces such as play spaces or cultural venues, and social and caring relationships such as friendships or support networks. These informal spaces and alliances can shed light on how to build alternative, bottom-up forms of social infrastructure.

Resumen: Este artículo explora la capacidad generativa de activistas y movimientos sociales que defienden bienes comunitarios de la comercialización o el cierre para producir nuevas formas de infraestructura social. Lo investigamos a través del caso de estudio del Westway, una autopista urbana en el oeste de Londres. La zona tiene una fuerte tradición de activismo comunitario, particularmente en las décadas de 1960 y 2010. A través de una Investigación Acción Participativa, elaboramos una reconstrucción histórica de la formación de infraestructura social en los espacios debajo y alrededor del Westway. Al hacerlo, desarrollamos un marco conceptual (procesos, alianzas y capacidades) para entender cómo grupos activistas y comunitarios contestando la pérdida de espacios comunitarios pueden generar nuevas formas de infraestructura social, tanto espacios físicos como espacios de juego o culturales, como relaciones sociales y de cuidados como amistades o redes de apoyo. Estos espacios informales y alianzas sociales pueden arrojar luz sobre cómo construir formas alternativas de infraestructura social de abajo hacia arriba.

Keywords: activism, social infrastructure, assemblage, Westway, community assets, London

Introduction

Both austerity economics and interventionist policies have led to the loss of social infrastructures worldwide. While the post-financial crash decade of the 2010s has seen spaces of social infrastructure privatised, redeveloped, or closed down (see Hitchen and Shaw 2019; Penny 2020; Robinson and Sheldon 2019), the interventionist policies of the post-war city also impacted communities through forms of enclosure and displacement (Sevilla-Buitrago 2015). In both, public authorities and developers can overlook or fail to appreciate the attachment that people have to places and the social and cultural importance that a place might have (Robinson and Sheldon 2019). This attachment between people and place is evident in local activism that challenges planning processes and outcomes. Grass-roots contestations often generate alliances, local interest groups, and campaigns to protect existing community assets. They can also proposition new forms of social infrastructure, either self-administered physical spaces or civic processes that emphasise social networks and relationships of care.

The areas around and beneath the Westway, an elevated motorway that passes through the neighbourhood of North Kensington in West London, exemplify how community activism can generate new forms of social infrastructure. We understand social infrastructure as “the physical places and organisations that shape the way people interact” (Klinenberg 2018:5), and we trace how it emerges from local activism related to the Westway. The motorway was one of only two built sections of a 1960s Greater London Council (GLC) ambition to develop a ring road, known as the London Motorway Box. We examine two periods. The first relates to the interventionist planning that the Westway’s construction was embedded in. This saw local groups starting using the space below the motorway, eventually leading to the formation of the North Kensington Amenity Trust (NKAT) in 1971, a community organisation to manage the 23 acres of land below the Westway. We then revisit the area four decades later, in 2015, a context characterised by post-2008 crash austerity-affected planning. Here we explore how a coalition of campaigns came together around the claims that this organisation—now named Westway Trust—was no longer serving its community purpose and had taken a commercialising approach to the supposedly safeguarded community spaces.

Through this case study, and looking at both periods, we trace how different forms of alliances, places where people gather, attachment between people and place, and interrelationships between actors, material and non-material, human and non-human (McFarlane 2011; Sendra 2018; Watt 2016) establish activist practices that can produce new forms of social infrastructure.

Our paper has two objectives. First, a “critical recovery of history” (Fals-Borda 1987) of activism along the Westway, looking at the processes of contestation to the loss of social infrastructure and at the spaces, groups, and social relationships that emerged from these processes. In doing so, we address the second objective: understanding how activist movements contesting imposed planning schemes have a generative capacity to create new forms of social infrastructure—both physical spaces for people to gather and caring relationships and support networks.

To address these objectives, we develop a framework to understand the *processes* for creating these social infrastructures, the *alliances* between different actors, and the *capacities* that emerge from social movements. This framework builds on assemblage thinking, which critical urbanists have used to explore existing social networks and the capacity of alliances and interrelations between different actors to challenge the power relations within them (McFarlane 2011; Sendra 2018). While much of the literature has focused on the capacity of assemblages to challenge power relations (McFarlane 2011), there is not much work on the capacity of activist movements to generate social infrastructure. We use assemblage thinking to explore the different types of relationships, alliances, and forms of contestation that have emerged from activism in North Kensington and their agency to protect and produce social infrastructures.

We first introduce our methodological approach, which builds on both academic and activist research. Second, we situate the two episodes of 1960s/1970s and 2010s activism in North Kensington and unpack the interim period. After this, we present the framework for analysing the case study. From this framework, we explore how activism generates forms of contestation to imposed planning and proposes alternative community-led spaces, and generates ties between people and more engaging relationships with places and buildings. The events are not explained chronologically. Instead, they are structured according to our framework, exploring the relationship between the forms of contestation and the generation of social infrastructure in both periods—1960s/1970s and 2010s.

Methodology

We use a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, which Fals-Borda (1987:329) defines as “a research methodology that combines theory, action and participation ... committed to further the interests of exploited groups and classes”. We combine PAR with auto-ethnography (see Gillespie et al. 2018). The three authors have had different levels of involvement in local campaigns in the area and reflect on their experiences in these campaigns. Toby Laurent Belson and Marco Thomas Picardi grew up in the area and have been campaigning for years on various local initiatives. Pablo Sendra is an activist-scholar who has supported community groups across London and has collaborated with local campaigners in North Kensington since 2016. The relationship between the authors started during an exploratory walk along the Westway in November 2016, guided by Marco Thomas Picardi, where participants discussed local dynamics with different community activists, including Toby Laurent Belson. This led to the first collaboration and knowledge exchange: the UCL Civic Design Summer School 2018, where students collaborated with community activists to co-produce proposals with local campaign groups. Since then, the authors have collaborated on co-producing knowledge and advising communities on planning issues. These collaborations have included co-teaching courses, co-producing research, and supporting campaigns. These have supposed a knowledge exchange in which communities gain skills in planning and influencing decision-making.

The local knowledge and experience of Toby Laurent Belson and Marco Thomas Picardi covers mainly the 2010s period. These experiences are forms of “situated knowledge”, which Rendell (2017), referencing Haraway (1988), explains as “first-hand knowledge and understanding of the experiences” (Rendell 2017). The Grenfell Tower Inquiry¹ and the Tutu Foundation Review into Institutional Racism at the Westway Trust² (Tutu Foundation 2020) have exposed a contested gap in perceptions of North Kensington between institutions and local people. Engaging with community knowledge provides a strong opportunity to authenticate and ratify local experiences and provide historical accounts from the perspective of those not in a position of power (Fals-Borda 1987). This includes the (non-academic) activist methods as well as experiencing power imbalances (see Rendell 2017) between the council, the Westway Trust, and the residents in decision-making processes. Toby Lauren Belson’s research as an activist stems from specific needs that cover a variety of roles and realities. As a person who has grown up in the local area and has felt various social and economic pressures as a low and precarious income mixed heritage black man from a single-parent family with little formal education (he has neither a degree nor any similar qualification); as a self-taught artist whose work focuses on community subjects; as someone who has held positions on the boards of various local organisations; as a campaigner and advocate for the local community who can effectively hold authority to account and effectively address a variety of public platforms including national and local media outlets. Marco Thomas Picardi, a chartered town planner, has leveraged his professional knowledge for local community purposes since 2013, setting up a campaign group called Green Westway to raise awareness of and challenge the polluting inevitability of the Westway and promote community greening initiatives and a registry of assets of community value, collaborating with local groups such as Grenfell Action Group and Reduce Air Pollution 23 (RAP23).

We build on the extensive research campaigners have done in the area for years. The methods used by activists have similarities to those used by academic researchers: participative observation and taking notes or minutes in regular meetings with community members, grassroots groups, and stakeholders; visiting archives—including Black Cultural Archives, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) Local Studies and Archives, Lambeth Libraries, Westminster Archives, George Padmore Institute, Bishopsgate Institute, Westway Trust—to locate primary source material concerned with underrepresented communities; carrying out desktop research on the local history of the area to support a particular claim or develop a community initiative; producing written reports, artistic responses, opinion pieces, and data visualisations for publication on websites, blogs, newsletters, magazines, social media pages, and public gatherings. Specific material researched has been the *West Indian Gazette* archive, the John La Rose archive, the Black Parents Movement, papers and documents relating to the murder of Kelso Cochrane, documents relating to Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists, the Community Action Movement, RBKC street study, Westminster street study, RBKC committees and full council minutes, Westway Trust annual reports and constitutional documents, Indices of Deprivation, and Hansard. The findings

of this activist research (developed by Toby Laurent Belson) have been published in a community history archive (Westway23 nd).

Toby Laurent Belson's activist research included a "critical recovery of history" (Fals-Borda 1987) of activism in the 1960s/1970s period, which involved two conversations in January 2020 with two of the main actors who managed to claim the land under the Westway for community use in the late 1960s—Adam Ritchie and John O'Malley. This has been complemented with further email correspondence between Pablo Sendra and Adam Ritchie in July 2019 and July 2022.

Through this collaboration alongside additional desktop research, we have explored how to co-produce knowledge, and we have used critical urban theory to understand and challenge the power relationships that happen on the ground, achieving the combination of "theory, action and participation" claimed by Fals-Borda (1987:329).

Making North Kensington

Despite the neatly ordered contours of London's new urban quarters, devised by place-branders and enforced by private security staff, North Kensington, like many of London's historic neighbourhoods, is an amorphous entity situated in an overlapping patchwork of interpretations. Google Maps has it listed in an area some locals would argue is its extreme north; estate agents prefer to use the catch-all Notting Hill; and many Londoners would know it simply as "Grove". The area can broadly be mapped around Ladbroke Grove, a north-south route connecting the ancient Roman road to Silchester, Holland Park Avenue, to the hard northern edges of 19th century industrialised circulation: the Grand Union Canal and the Great Western Railway (see Figures 1 and 2). The West London Line provides a hard border to the west, whereas in the east, as one walks from Portobello Road, the local market and high street, the area gently gives way to Bayswater and Paddington. It is transected by the A40 flyover: the Westway (see also Figure 3).

While in some conceptions North Kensington bleeds into the neighbouring boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Brent, and Westminster, central to its

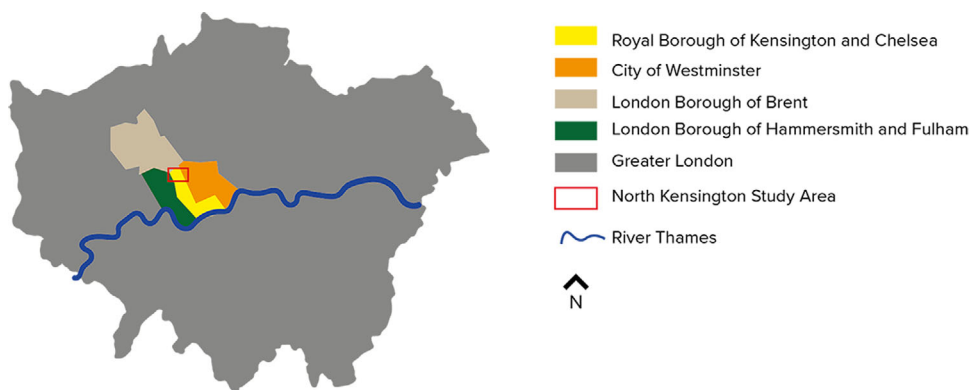


Figure 1: Study area location (source: elaborated by Marco Thomas Picardi)

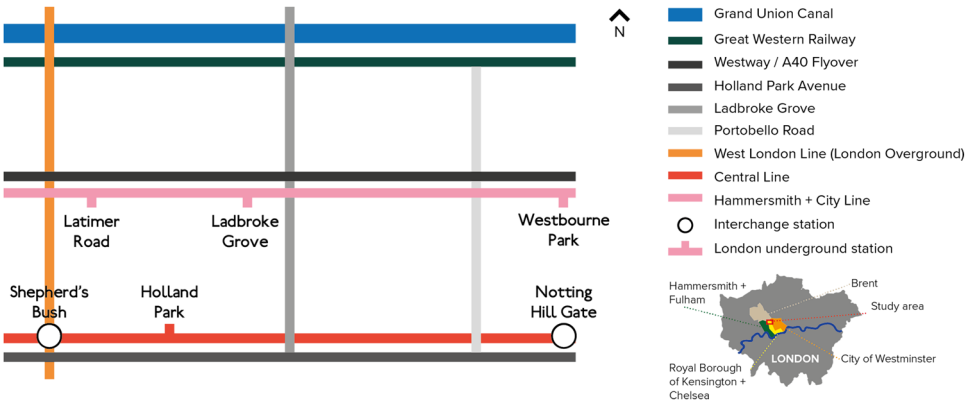


Figure 2: Key infrastructural features in the study area (source: elaborated by Marco Thomas Picardi)

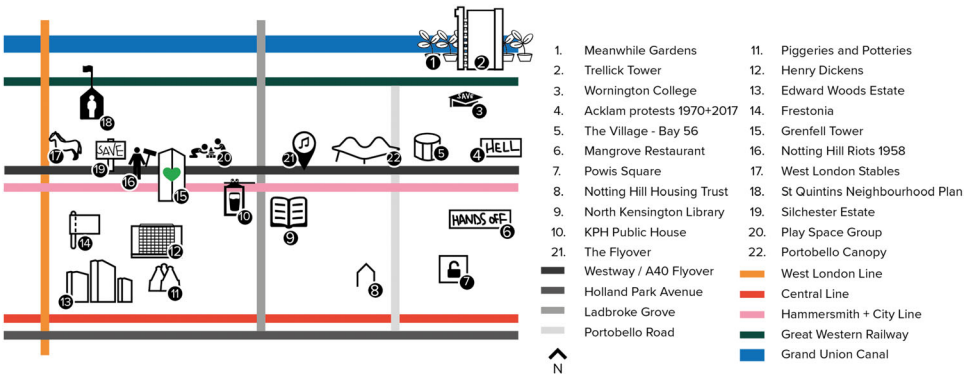


Figure 3: Key community assets and landmarks in the study area (source: elaborated by Marco Thomas Picardi)

imaginary is the part within the eponymous Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) (see Figure 1), one of the wealthiest and most densely populated local authorities in the United Kingdom. Beneath this veneer of wealth, Kensington & Chelsea reveals itself as a hybrid of London's most and least deprived wards, with life expectancy for men dropping from 94 in Knightsbridge to 72 in Golborne, as revealed in a report commissioned by the then local MP, Emma Dent Coad (2017), to investigate the multiplicity of inequalities afflicting the borough following the Grenfell Tower fire in the area, which saw at least 72 people tragically lose their lives. Grenfell Tower and Golborne are located in North Kensington alongside the majority of the borough's deprived wards, and it is here that interventionist policies and austerity economics have converged to make this a rapidly changing part of the borough.

North Kensington was first urbanised by land speculators in the 19th century to construct a London suburb for the emerging bourgeoisie of British industrialisation and empire. As the Ladbrooke and St Quintin families set out the villas on

their estates, the area was also settled by livestock rearers and brickmakers being pushed out of an urbanising West End. Around the turn of the 20th century, the piggeries and potteries of Notting Dale were highlighted in Charles Booth's poverty map (London School of Economics 2016) as an area of a "vicious semi-criminal class" and "upper classes" living side-by-side, representing strikingly similar spatial inequalities to those captured by Emma Dent Coad's report in 2017. Following decades of bourgeois growth, successive waves of migration from continental Europe, and the urbanisation of surrounding areas, North Kensington had become an inner London neighbourhood by the middle of the 20th century.

In the post-war period, a heavily bombed North Kensington became a focus for large-scale urban renewal. Speaking in Parliament in 1963, MP and future Prime Minister Harold Wilson linked the 1957 Rent Act easing control on rents to the existing poverty in North Kensington, as it was enabling a growth of slum landlordism to forcibly push occupants out in order to illegally subdivide houses into homes of multiple occupation (HC Deb 1963). In an accommodation sector characterised by signs of "No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs", this cramped, squalid, and insecure accommodation offer was often the only choice for arrivals from the British Empire, and Notting Hill quickly became a centre of Irish and Caribbean London (Vague 2012). As the London County Council labelled North Kensington an area of concern for housing, there was a simultaneous growth of houses being converted back into single-family homes (Cartwright 2020). This spatial contraction and densification of deprivation contributed to the 1960s interventionist policies that saw slum clearance occur under the pretext of urban renewal; the Cheltenham Estate (host of the modernist icon of Trellick Tower), Lancaster West (including the now equally iconic Grenfell Tower), Edward Woods, Silchester, and Henry Dickens estates were all built on former slum plots (Leech 1988) (see Figure 3).

The Westway was not just situated in this context of upheaval; rather, it actively contributed to it. The then Kensington North MP, Bruce Douglas-Mann, estimated a destruction of up to 5,000 homes for each mile of the Westway (HC Deb 1972). When the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, Michael Heseltine, led the procession to open the flyover, metres away residents stood atop nearby homes on Acklam Road unfurled banners, including the infamous "Get Us Out of This Hell", a motif repeated by Westway23 activists 40 years later on the same street with their banner "40 Years of Hell". Alongside protest movements, people began to reframe leftover spaces of intervention as community assets that could be socially embedded outside of any functionalist logic. Spaces under the Westway were improvised for sport and children's play (Griffin 2008), in the rubble of demolished homes in Kensal Town people asked to create a garden for the "meanwhile" (McCullough 1978), and squatters moved into an island of condemned homes cut off by the Westway, adopting the motto "We Are All One Family" (Coley 2015). These seemingly improvised initiatives established a long legacy. The use of the space below the flyover as adventure playgrounds led to claiming the 23 acres of land for community use; Meanwhile Gardens is a garden still run by community members half a century later; and the

art-centred squat People's Republic of Frestonia lives on as a housing cooperative today, Bramley Housing Coop. The building of the motorway had created the physical space preconditions for new occupancy through demolition and clearance, but social infrastructures that emerged were linked to wider local dynamics (see these initiatives mapped in Figure 3).

The emergence of these fledgling assemblages of social infrastructure coevolved from years of protest and grassroots organising. As the local environment changed, a multitude of community initiatives took hold. The Notting Hill Carnival was partially born in response to the racist attacks and subsequent riots of 1958, the racist murder of Kelso Cochrane in 1959, and Oswald Mosley's attempts to gain traction for his far-right Union Movement from 1957 onward, which included a provocative public meeting on the very spot where Cochrane had been murdered, two months after his death (Vague 2012). The London Free School was founded to decentre education from institutional control; the Notting Hill Housing Trust was born in response to the local slum landlordism growth resulting from the 1957 Rent Act; the UK's first community law centre, the North Kensington Law Centre, formed to support local people with welfare and housing rights; and the Notting Hill People's Association became a catch-all umbrella group for local civic activity (Byles and Morris 1977). These assemblages established a supportive environment for the new social infrastructures to emerge at the Westway while coalescing to push for policy improvements, seen in the 1970s with new rent controls and grants for housing improvements.

In the decades between the two periods of study, 1960s/1970s and 2010s, it was intervention in the rules of the housing market rather than the demolition and building of homes that underpinned a new slow-burn urban renewal in North Kensington. Social rent homes peaked in 1981, and by the end of the decade, the removal of rent controls, new tax incentives for "buy-to-let" loans, accelerated eviction processes, introduced short-term tenancies, and the Right to Buy for council homes meant that this well-connected inner London area became ripe for new housing speculation as the city's financial sectors grew (Power et al. 2018). Community assets started to suffer from this emergent commercialisation in the 1990s, with the Westway Trust developing a commercial sports centre that became Britain's most visited centre of its kind by the 2000s. By the 2010s, the Notting Hill Housing Trust had begun to absorb some smaller housing associations, paving the way for the Grenfell Action Group to describe them in 2015 as "indistinguishable from the many other predatory corporations that rule the neo-con jungle" (Grenfell Action Group 2015a). These gradual transformations contributed to creating new assemblages that combined to protest and establish new spaces and social infrastructure.

The history of social infrastructure in North Kensington evidences a symbiosis between the changing built form and local people's ability to harness it and its representation to create new community assets. In this way, the Westway and its relationship to North Kensington is at once exclusionary and inclusionary, exogenous and endogenous, noxious and regenerative.

Processes, Alliances, and Capacities for Generating Social Infrastructure

Klinenberg (2018) explains what constitutes social infrastructure and what does not count. Within the spaces and organisations that contribute to the social infrastructure, he includes “[p]ublic institutions, such as libraries, schools, playgrounds...” (Klinenberg 2018:16); open spaces that invite people to gather such as community gardens; “[c]ommunity organisations ... [that] have an established physical space where people can assemble” (ibid.); and some commercial establishments where people congregate and interact. On the other hand, he explains that transit networks cannot be considered social infrastructure as they are designed for cars and keep people apart. However, he explains that “conventional hard infrastructure can be engineered to double as social infrastructure” (Klinenberg 2018:17). This process of transforming a transit-oriented physical infrastructure—an elevated urban motorway—into a social infrastructure took place in North Kensington in the late 1960s, when the space below the Westway became a 23-acre community space. This process of “becoming”, as McFarlane (2011) would put it, is the result of an assemblage of activists, situations, cracks in the system, creative direct actions, racial struggles, and needs from communities that saw thousands of homes destroyed for the construction of a motorway. North Kensington constitutes a form of generating social infrastructure through struggles and grassroots contestation.

The chronology of North Kensington shows how assemblages of actors, actions, material elements, and planning processes have interacted to become reconfigured as social infrastructure. We explore the *processes* through which these movements are built, the diverse forms of *alliances*, and their *capacity* to contest power and imposed planning and propose alternative community spaces, forms of living, and relationships with people and places. Through these processes, alliances, and capacities, we create a framework to retell the history of the Westway and its surrounding areas with a PAR approach—a “critical recovery of history” (Fals-Borda 1987) that puts the struggles at the centre of the discussion. Our framework builds on McFarlane’s (2011) work on assemblage, which sees the term useful to understand urban inequalities and challenge them, to understand the agency that emerges from the relationship between social and material components of the assemblage, and also understands assemblages as an imaginary of togetherness.

When exploring the history of the Westway from the *processes* of contestation that took place, we look at how social movements were formed, the events that triggered them, the forms of contestation they used, the social and spatial transformations that emerged from processes of contestation, and the social infrastructures that emerged from them—new social relationships, physical and digital spaces to gather. This relates to McFarlane’s (2011:206) conception of assemblage as “indeterminacy, emergence, becoming, processuality, turbulence and the sociomateriality of phenomena”, as well as to his conception of assemblage as understanding urban inequalities in order to challenge them. The succession of events in the Westway is a transformation process from imposed schemes into

disruptions that challenge these imposed schemes (Sendra and Sennett 2020) and generate new forms of social infrastructure.

The second component of the framework is the *alliances* between diverse social movements that take place and how they generate traction and power to propose new forms of social infrastructure. We look at the events that trigger these alliances, the different initiatives that come together, and the relationships and spaces that emerge from them. The alliances bring the imaginary of togetherness that McFarlane (2011) discusses, where diverse groups come together to imagine an alternative future. These alliances generate a form of power. This sees Dahl's (1957:201) relational definition of power, "A has power over B to the extent that ... [it] can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do", expanded by Dovey's (2011:349, citing Arendt 1986) notion of power "as a capacity that is produced through collective action". Different groups and campaigns with different interests/agendas generate Dovey's notion of power through alliances of activist groups (Dovey 2011; Long 2013). This provides an additional dimension to the conception of power, often limited to describing oppression in critical theory. Not only is there power in establishing social infrastructures as an outcome, but the alliances themselves as a form of power.

The third component explored how these alliances, when engaging with an assemblage of actions, material objects, institutions, spaces, and technologies, develop a series of *capacities* to generate new forms of social infrastructure. This is related to the agency that emerges from the interaction between social and material components of an assemblage, as explained by McFarlane (2011). In the case of North Kensington, the components of these assemblages include people, buildings, public spaces, blogs, infrastructure, community spaces, a constellation of campaign groups, institutions, situations of injustice, resistance to imposed planning decisions, campaigning materials, and various artistic expressions such as music, art performances, or visual arts (see, for example, Figure 4). As mentioned



Figure 4: Westway23, Another Way (illustration by Toby Laurent Belson, January 2016)

above, these assemblages develop the capacity to contest power and propose alternative forms of living collectively.

If we look at activist movements that took place in North Kensington in the 1960s/1970s and the locally-based grassroots movements that have taken place recently in the 2010–2020 decade, we can find parallels and similar types of *processes*, *alliances*, and *capacities* to contest wider policy mobilities in both periods 50 years apart (see Table 1). This framework shows how forms of community-based activism converge to respond to processes of imposed change, establish alliances by cultivating relationships, and generate capacity through engaging with materiality. Each assemblage draws on experiences from the 1960s/1970s and the 2010s, that are not linear but rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), allowing different entry points and can go back and forth in time in a non-linear process, establishing a dialogue between the two periods.

While other studies have focused on how social movements operate, their tactics and their capacity to contest neoliberal developments, we focus on the *processes*, *alliances*, and *capacities* of these social movements to generate social infrastructure. The social infrastructures emerging from these social movements address Klinenberg's (2018) definition of social infrastructure. They address the three dimensions outlined by the Early Action Task Force (2018): "buildings, facilities and the built environment"; "strong and healthy communities (social capital; social norms; influence and control; partnership working)"; and "services and organisations (public, private and voluntary)". They provide physical social infrastructure, which are new places that are created by collective action. They generate relationships of solidarity, a collective sense of place, and local capacity to influence decision-making. They challenge closed and hierarchical institutions to attempt to make them more open through a productive interaction with grassroots movements. Understanding the value of this emergent social infrastructure helps understand what cities need to enable social relationships (Latham and Layton 2019).

Processes of Contestation

The wonders of our diverse and genuinely special community—and others across London—simply cannot survive in an authentic manner because we are forced to adapt to this economic juggernaut. (quoted in Urban Dandy London 2015a)

The battle in Notting Hill Gate is not just a battle in a small and highly populated area of London, it is representative in a definitive sense of the battle of a whole new society. (Frendz in the early 1970s, quoted in Scribner et al. 2015)

These two quotations about North Kensington can be read as continuous syntax, yet they were written 45 years apart about two separate incidents of imposed order in a particular place. The former are the words of a member of Westway23 in 2015, a protest movement born in response to "Destination Westway" development proposals from the rebranded NKAT, the Westway Trust, and the latter is

Table 1: Processes, alliances, and capacities of social infrastructure building

Lens	Period	North Kensington context	Activism	Social infrastructure outcomes
Processes	1960s–1970s	Urban renewal and construction of the Westway motorway	Building of play structures and establishment of playgroups Incremental occupation of space under the flyover and leftover space around North Kensington	Creation of Meanwhile Gardens and other community stewardship groups that survive to the current day
	2010s	Urban regeneration and proposals for a new shopping arcade under Destination Westway	Creation of blogs and blogging culture, which generate new local digital spaces	Blogs and petition help create new mutual support group Westway23
	1960s/ 1970s	Local public space privatisation and housing problems	Creation of alternative education grouping London Free School, squatting culture, and embracing of Afro-Caribbean perspectives Direct action linking with local and London-wide campaigns and movements	People’s Association affiliated groups have support for initiatives, including Playspace Group
Capacities	2010s	Commercialisation of Westway Trust and wider community assets across North Kensington	Links to previous campaigns through archiving and documentary making, as well as embracing non-Western practices Direct action links different local campaigns together	Local campaigns save library and college and join governance organisations of these assets
	1960s/1970s	Post-Westway building institutional interactions	Play and experimentation central to organisation Occupation of land under the Westway to create new material space	Playspace group becomes Motorway Development Trust, which results in the creation of the NKAT
	2010s	Post-Grenfell Fire relief institution building	Healing, art, and music as central to organisation Occupation of land under the Westway for donations creates a new material space	Westway23 members elected to Westway Trust board and formation of Grenfell United

a report from a local independent newspaper, *Frendz*, decrying the GLC's urban renewal in 1970, the year the Westway was built.

The planning decisions in North Kensington can be contextualised by wider processes: the GLC's building of the Westway flyover was embedded in the urban renewal of the late 1960s,³ and the Westway Trust's "Destination Westway" in the urban regeneration of the 2010s. This wider framing of both processes enhanced the opportunity for local people to question the legitimacy of planning proposals by linking them to wider assemblages of contestation. In the political discourse, the ringway was about solving traffic (Jenkins 1973), but it was inseparable from calls for a new urbanity being pushed nationally by the likes of the Society for the Promotion of Urban Renewal (Gold 2012), which was expressing itself locally through the slum clearance programmes of the 1950s (Owen 1987). In the 1960s, the wider interpretation of local housing typologies as slums enabled the decision to construct the Westway through this location, as these homes needed to be renewed.

In the same way, in 2015, "Destination Westway", the Westway Trust's plan, was situated in the broader strategy pushed by the council. RBKC had in the same year issued a leaflet named "Regeneration: What It Could Mean for You", warning residents that it was exploring "demolishing housing blocks or estates" (RBKC 2015). The Westway Trust, who detailed the need for their plans in a funding bid to the Greater London Authority (GLA) as the result of "lack of a coordinated marketing message for local offer" (GLA 2015), was being seen as fully aligned to the council's plans by local activists. The Grenfell Action Group saw the two bodies as part of an "un-holy trinity" of North Kensington governance with the then local tenant management organisation Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO) (Grenfell Action Group 2017).

Planning in both periods is understood as the attempted imposition of an alien vision to North Kensington as a place. Adam Ritchie, one of the founders of the Playspace Group that claimed the land for community use in the 1960s/1970s, outlined misalignment between local views and planning: "they were going to build a 22-foot-high concrete wall shutting off the underneath of the motorway for the car park. It would just become this awful space ... Everything was so badly thought-out" (quoted in Gras 2018). One of the protagonists described it as an opportunity to "rescue something worthwhile from the jaws of defeat" (Deer 2001). This perception of planning being anathema to place is echoed half a century later in contestation of "Destination Westway" by Niles Hailstones, a founding member of Westway23: "What we're seeing here is a super imposition of a culture and perception from outside imposed by people from outside the area" (quoted in Urban Dandy London 2015b). And a petition against the scheme underlined that proposals were counter to the area's identity: "such revolting developments are chipping away at our London and sucking it dry of its lifeblood and individuality" (Sullivan 2015; see also Prynne 2015).

The community's contestation of perceived imposed visions is seen by its protagonists as resulting from people's rootedness in the place (see Figure 4). Jamie McCullough (1978:17), founder of Meanwhile Gardens, believed that a place and its community were two sides of the same coin: "If people round your way talk to

each other and do things together, you've got a community. If they don't, you haven't". Chris Sullivan, the man whose online petition was signed by more than 14,000 people in a few days, which led to the first public meeting of Westway23, affirmed that McCullough's conception of community converging at the nexus of place and culture remained extant: "I always bump into my friends and meet people, get something to eat from one of the food stalls, buy a piece of vintage clothing, a book or bric a brac. It is the hub of the community and as much a social zone as a commercial one" (quoted in Derbyshire 2015). This can also be traced in some local cultural ephemera: being explicitly referenced in the heart roundel adorned with "COMEUNITY" designed by local artist Sophie Lodge for the 2016 Carnival, and later adopted as a symbol of post-Grenfell fire togetherness.

In the 1960s, the motorway's destruction of homes established leftover space beneath its concrete undercarriage. Given the lack of open spaces in the area, this void became an opportunity for people to congregate. Soon enough, new social infrastructures harnessed this area to form spatial responses to the problems of local living conditions, migration issues, child poverty, and imposed clearances. By the 2010s, following the rise of Web 2.0, local community gathering places had mutated from under the Westway into a digital-physical hybrid of local cultural places. These included the Westway23 Facebook page that quickly grew to around 2,000 members, which for a long time eclipsed the reach of the official Westway Trust Facebook page, as well as local blogs such as the Portobello Café Society, the Grenfell Action Group, and From the Hornets Nest (FTHN) that chronicled local issues, hosted message boards, and petitioned for change. While the 1960s/1970s had local independent paper-based news such as *Frendz*, in the 2010s this new bidirectional media created new potential for community interactions. By creating conversations around contesting the decisions and plans of the Westway Trust and the council, these message boards proved instrumental in providing alternative narratives for local people, functioning as a new version of the Westway underbelly, establishing both (digital) places for interaction and new visibility of often less visible issues. Some of these spaces, such as FTHN, have anonymous comment sections providing space for even more candid conversation. FTHN had been tracking the Westway Trust's failure to not renew the leases of a horse-riding stables, an event space, and a children's centre in a series of posts from 2014 (From the Hornets Nest 2014, 2015a, 2015b), and these were being commented on anonymously by scores of users, and cross-posted elsewhere, such as the Grenfell Action Group who had long been documenting the threat to community uses under the flyover (Grenfell Action Group 2015b). This evidences how the steward of community land, the Westway Trust, had shifted away from community to a more commercial *modus operandi* in the eyes of local digital places.

45 years apart, two different sets of local civic actors took direct action in local physical and digital domains to reframe perceived destructive planning agendas and propose new social infrastructure. In the 2010s, contesting high-spec renders in the local digital culture sphere alongside physical community meetings became crucial to galvanise support for actions and delegitimise the certainty of envisioned planning outcomes. While the medium was different decades apart, in

both cases a clear disconnect emerged between local people and the authorities—the GLC and the Westway Trust—on what kind of infrastructure the Westway should be. With people now occupying the leftover spaces of construction, and blogging about the rendered plans, the Westway as a destroyer of homes in the 1970s or a destroyer of the market's identity in the 2010s was being challenged in its manifested location. As new activities brought to life an alternative use of space under the Westway, similarly Destination Westway's digital presence existed on more critical local blogs than on official communication channels. The combination of direct action in local physical and digital places transformed space and culture *de facto*, shifting the *de jure* envisioned space into a less feasible outcome. In both cases, the imposed meaning of the Westway was misaligned with local communities becoming an increasingly exogenous infrastructure despite its locality, prompting activism to establish new social infrastructures.

Networked Alliances to Create Power

Every man thinks his burden is the heaviest
 But (ooh, yea, come on) they know because they feel
 Who feels it knows it, Lord
 Who feels it knows it, Lord
 Who feels it knows it, Lord
 —Bob Marley & The Wailers, "Who Feels It (Knows It)", 1966

They developed a growing conviction of the need to work at the grass roots level, with all political activity growing out of the needs experienced by working people. (O'Malley 1977:32)

Community claims over space in both periods were scaffolded by wider networks of civic action, and in themselves became supporting systems for other local projects. Emblematic of this dynamic is the Westway Trust itself; having been born from the 1960s People's Association to become the community's custodian of the land after the destructive flyover construction, it then became perceived by local campaigns as the community's villain in the 2010s imposing an external corporate agenda on local space, spawning a new self-proclaimed community custodian, Westway23, that enabled a number of other local campaigns. The actions of the Westway Trust in 2015 brought a collective memory to the surface. The community perceived the threats as multiple and seemingly connected—had they been entirely separate, perhaps the second wave of activism in the 2010s would not have been so vibrant. In both periods of activism, threats brought about large public meetings and direct actions that coalesced concerns, produced mandates for action, and identified committed persons to carry out the work needed.

As groups were set up in the 1960s and 1970s, people crisscrossed between them. By 1970, North Kensington's social infrastructure had evolved from philanthropist benevolence of the immediate post-war period to become centred on activist civic initiatives that drew wider participation (Owen 1987). While the London-wide Motorway Action Group provided a supporting structure for

contesting the motorway as a concept, radical Afro-Caribbean activism before and after the Notting Hill 1958 riots, local squatting culture, the creation of the London Free School, and the establishment of play spaces in the voids formed by demolition were fertile ground for the gathering support for re-embedding land into society (Gras 2018; Holmes 2005). A cycle of new waves began to cement—in some cases literally—a new cultural heritage of North Kensington, where the party-political scene was reduced to relative obscurity, usurped bloodlessly by a conveyor belt of assemblages of social movements. These organisations and their activities can be understood as a combination of adversarial relations and softer co-option through culture that gradually shifted the potential for local people to negotiate with planning authorities through their actions. The 1967 formation of the Notting Hill People's Association came about in response to the collapse of one exploitative housing provider. The Association's immediate focus was on tenants, fighting discrimination, and play spaces, and the catch-all remit resulted in the formation of over ten groups within it, lasting until 1971 (O'Malley 1977:59). Threats were identified, solutions discussed and fought for, and progress was made as assemblages of a variety of local tenants, students, and visitors, came together to contest power; through a series of meetings, gatherings, and marches, they succeeded in opening up the hitherto private Powis Square (Vague 2012). Their explicitly open approach produced different angles of approach and methods, including cross purposes (O'Malley 1977:29). Among them was the Playspace Group that would win the 23 acres beneath the Westway for the benefit of the local community.

In 2015, over four decades after the 23 acres beneath the flyover were contested, new crisscrossing groups emerged contesting the increasingly commercialised Trust's "Destination Westway", an envisioned wholesale redevelopment of the community land under the flyover. Westway23, the emergent grouping, became a quasi-People's Association organising regular meetings, spawning and supporting the growth of new local groups. Campaigns such as Reclaim Our Carnival, who met at the Tabernacle, and Save Wornington College, who met at Bevington Primary School, were enabled or supported by Westway23. Other direct actions were organised by members of Westway23, including a march to the town hall for the "Save North Kensington Library Building for Public Use" campaign, a march to the Holland Park Opera and the shutting down or taking over of the Westway Trust's Annual General Meetings between 2015 and 2019. In these actions, Westway23 created a new visibility of different issues occurring across the 23 acres of community land and North Kensington. The threatened shutdown of the ground-breaking Maxilla Children's Centre under the flyover was joined by the West London Stables, a community horse-riding centre under the motorway faced with a similar fate, who joined marches with their ponies. The recent closures of Westway Trust's tenants, the Flyover music venue and the Pop-Up Cinema, brought together two creative communities determined to resist the cultural decimation that was taking place across the country (Connolly 2015). All groups were able to locate their struggles and strengths within a long timeline of local community contestation and generation of new social infrastructures.

These different alliances began to show how the board of the Westway Trust did not represent the local community by any reasonable metric (Westway23 2016); several decisions had been made that raised serious questions over the organisation's willingness or capacity to respond to issues of equality or social justice. People had tried to create quick fixes or join as individuals or small groups previously and evidently been marginalised or tokenised, as one former Trustee testified to the council (Kensington & Chelsea Council 2019). Upon exposing this, campaigners insisted that only two reasonable courses of action existed. One was to rebalance the organisation's leadership (Westway23 2016), and the second was to undertake an independent review into the institutional issues that were becoming increasingly apparent (Westway23 2019b). The Tutu Foundation was engaged in collaboration with the Westway Trust to examine the legacy of the organisation, unpack its coloniality, and engage in community reconciliation (Tutu Foundation 2020; Westway23 2019a). Despite being a community development organisation in one of the UK's leading areas of diversity and genuine progressive grassroots action, the investigation found that the Westway Trust had become an organisation engaged in institutional racism (Tutu Foundation 2020).

Unlike the People's Association, Westway23 consciously located their actions within a local timeline. Since Niles Hailstones took up the position of Chair of Westway23, he immediately established the practice of holding a silence at the beginning and end of each meeting to acknowledge those that came before. The Westway23 webpage quickly created a well-documented local history archive, setting up working groups, including Reduce Air Pollution 23 (RAP23), to meet in spaces such as the Tabernacle, where the walls are adorned with documentary footage of past struggles. Consciously, the new 2010s assemblages drew power by connecting the skills, knowledge, and experience that inhabit the locality and providing space for communal healing. The power of this collectivity could be glimpsed in 2017 when all parliamentary candidates from major parties for Kensington attended RAP23's "Let's Clear Some Air" meeting as crowd members without making speeches. Westway23 was connecting disparate local campaigns, from the air quality concerns of the Westway flyover to the prevention of the closing of a nursery. It mutated from a single-issue campaign to become an engine for common unity, providing visibility of the unknown and establishing the potential for new *alliances*.

These alliances helped gather the momentum, following the deadly Grenfell Tower fire in the summer of 2017, for two community campaigns that were all but lost. The 125-year-old landmark, Grade-II-listed North Kensington Library building was due to be leased to a private school, following a complete refusal from either the council or private school to engage with the arguments of the community (Cooper 2016; Friends of North Kensington Library 2017, 2019; Paget-Brown 2016). Nearby, the much-loved Kensington & Chelsea College reached the brink of a merger with Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College that risked it losing its premises (Offord 2018). Both of these community assets had their services continued and secured a greater involvement of community groups in their governance.

In the same way that the perceived threats were connected to broader dynamics, the networked local assemblages were also tied to ex-situ issues. The 1960s and 1970s movements relied to some extent on experiences gained outside the locality (O'Malley 1977:28–32), which were honed through local experience into a way of working effectively with and within the community. Residents such as Baron Baker used Caribbean experiences of political upheaval and military service to provide strategic and tactical direction and mobilisation (Octavia Foundation nd). This established an effective community way of doing things to sustain intense periods of—often voluntary—work, experiences of failure, and extract valuable lessons and narratives, including from many transient collaborations. Current community action still relies on this way of working—and explicitly draws on non-European ways of being, such as Ubuntu, “we need other human beings in order to be human” (Tutu 2004), and Sankofa, where returning to our roots is the way to move forward (UIS African-American Studies 2022). This is perhaps most evident in the rituals of meetings that always start and end with a minute’s contemplation of those who came before. Today’s activities and alliances include additional intentionality that establishes a shared and locally relevant analysis of race and class that was not present previously (O'Malley 1977:31).

Building Community Capacity

In both periods of campaigning, 1960s/1970s and 2010s, material objects, self-built structures, occupied spaces, banners, placards, and others became relevant actors of emergent social infrastructures that influenced institutional change. These material actors become allies of the activists and instrumental in making space that helps build capacity for each grouping. The spaces and objects, in their assemblage with people, political situations, bureaucratic structures, institutions, and campaign claims, develop capacity both for contesting dominating powers and to propose new forms of social infrastructure, which include spaces to gather, programmes of activities, and new social relations between locals.

In the 1960s, this socio-material assemblage that generates agency (McFarlane 2011) to contest imposed planning decisions and generates new forms of social infrastructure materialised in the self-built adventure playgrounds under the Westway during its construction (see Figure 5). In the 2010s, one of the ways it materialised was at The Village, a community-managed space that was established as a grassroots response to the Grenfell fire (see Figure 6). Both spaces emerged from collective action to create new social infrastructure.

In the summer of 1966, just before the construction of the Westway started, Adam Ritchie and John O'Malley founded the North Kensington Playspace Group. The need for play spaces in the area inspired them to start using part of the cleared sites for the Westway as play spaces in the summer (Westway23 nd). Alongside play spaces, they started a campaign for the “community control of the space under the motorway for community use”⁴. A manifest alternative to the GLC’s plans for an eight-acre car park under the elevated section.

In 1968 and 1969, the North Kensington Playspace Group “got permission from the GLC to use six bays between St Marks Road and Ladbroke Grove”⁵ for



Figure 5: Adventure playground near St Marks Road, 1968 (copyright: Adam Ritchie; reproduced here with permission)

their summer play programmes. These were self-built adventure playgrounds, where children and adults from the Playspace Group got involved in the playground construction—something antithetical to the strict safety regulations that characterise today's building practice and limit material engagement. The self-built adventure playgrounds under the Westway were experimental spaces, becoming, in their building process and their outcome, new social infrastructure for adults and children. They were important actors in the campaigns to prevent the car park and then to claim the land for community use:



Figure 6: The Village, Bay 56 Acklam Village (photograph by Pablo Sendra, May 2018)

We [the North Kensington Playspace Group] changed our name ... to the Motorway Development Trust when it became clear that the local community needed all 23 acres to provide a whole range of facilities to redress the appalling deprivation of the whole area. We were trying to get the authorities (GLC, ILEA and RBKC) to set up a community-controlled trust to run the scheme and we put forward such a scheme. RBKC did set up the NKAT, later the Westway Development Trust ... They ran the scheme for 50 years as a charitable trust [...] with almost total control by the council and fairly minimal input from the community.

The GLC told us that the printed plans for an eight-acre car park were provisional and would not be built. One day the five-metre-high concrete planks arrived, and they started erecting the car park. We challenged this strongly. Then they said that they had given themselves planning permission when the motorway plans were first discussed, so it couldn't be stopped. We knew someone who had served on the Planning Committee who had no memory of the car park ever being given planning permission. When I asked to see copies of the permission, the GLC town clerk audibly gulped. The next day, illegal parking bay construction stopped. The lorry with a full load of the concrete planks was quietly driven away from site. We had a half-page article in the *Times* and a leader in the *Guardian* both in strong favour of our scheme and then another meeting with the GLC. We got the six bays under Westway to run a summer play programme and later NKAT was set up.⁶

In the 1970s, campaigners had no alternative but to accept the creation of NKAT, the body that would administer the 23 acres on behalf of the local community. NKAT would become, for all intents and purposes, a long arm of the Conservative-controlled RBKC council (Duncan 1992:30). The community had to accept their minority position on a board where half the trustees were Conservative councillors. From that moment on, the institutional establishment clawed back whatever control it could.

50 years later, on 14 June 2017, the Grenfell Tower fire took the lives of at least 72 people of the North Kensington community. In contrast with the government's slow response to this tragedy, the community self-organised and responded in solidarity with the victims. Residents and bereaved families quickly established Grenfell United and, building on the networks created to contest

Destination Westway, people gathered again under the Westway. Westway23 activist and musician Niles Hailstones (Asheber) had the keys of Bay 56 in Acklam Village—on Westway Trust land—that day for an event he was organising (Amrani 2017). As the Grenfell fire was unfolding, the community turned it into an improvised space for receiving, organising, and storing donations for the victims, and it has since evolved into a healing space for a community.

Like the adventure playgrounds in the late 1960s, The Village took possession of a shell and began populating it with objects to make a new space. In a matter of days, it became a collage of campaign banners, placards, art pieces, old furniture, a diversity of musical instruments, non-insulated wooden panels that enclose the space, and a programme of activities open to everyone, which provides a valuable social infrastructure.

On a Sunday evening, I went with my partner and my three-year-old son to one of the jam sessions that take place in The Village. Every Sunday evening, musicians and other people gather there to improvise music. We arrived at The Village at Bay 56. One of the activists/musicians greets us and tells us that there are drumming lessons going on and that the jam session will start shortly. We sit on a sofa behind the drummers. While listening to the music, we observe the diversity of pieces of art, objects, campaign banners, and wooden panels enclosing the space that compose The Village. The drummers keep playing and other musicians climb onto the stage and start playing other instruments. The jam session has started without interruption. Some of the drummers stand up and go for some food. One of the drummers smiles at us and invites us to join and play the drums. (Visit to The Village, Pablo Sendra, December 2019)

As an assemblage of material and non-material elements, The Village is composed as an unfinished space in continuous evolution. It has transformed a space under the motorway into an inclusive space for healing and solidarity. From serving as a space for managing and storing donations to becoming a locus for hosted events, workshops, music lessons, and open sessions for the Tutu Foundation Institutional Racism Review, it has become a central space and actor for North Kensington activism. It serves to build the capacity for people to act and interact.

The Village is a space for experimenting with how to build social infrastructure collectively. It is a prototype and an incubator for the new possibility of rebuilding the Trust. Since 2020, a handful of members of Westway23 have sat on the board of the Westway Trust, including Toby Laurent Belson, as Chair. A new chapter of Westway capacity has been opened, with an intention to divest it from damaging institutional behaviours and outcomes. The mirror is turned onto the community.

Conclusion

This paper provides two main contributions. First, it provides a “critical recovery of history” (Fals-Borda 1987) of the formation of social infrastructure under the Westway and surrounding spaces in North Kensington, putting grassroots struggles at the centre of the discussion. This is done through testimonies from some

of the campaigners involved in these struggles and other secondary sources, many of which involve community-led documenting and archiving. Second, by making this critical recovery of history, the paper develops a framework to understand how activist movements and community groups, when contesting the closure or commodification of community spaces, generate new forms of social infrastructure—both physical spaces that emerge from these processes of contestation, and relationships of solidarity. This framework—*processes, alliances, and capacities*—has consisted of exploring the processes of contestation that have taken place and how they were triggered; the alliances that took place between different groups and the motivations that enabled these groups to coalesce; and the capacities that communities and activist groups develop from these processes, paying particular attention at how they engage with material objects and spaces to take direct action and gain agency to interact with institutions and generate new spaces for gathering.

In the case of the Westway, this framework has helped to understand two periods of activism and contestation that are five decades apart. This has allowed us to find parallels between the two periods and to understand those processes through which social movements can gain power and agency to create spaces for resistance. When looking at the processes for contestation, in the 1960s, we have explored how the destruction generated by the construction of the Westway led to the formation of playgroups and the creative use of empty spaces, which led to spaces and organisations that still survive today, and which provided a legacy of activism and communities engaged in social justice in the area that has inspired generations. In the 2010s, it was the controversial Destination Westway scheme, which would have destroyed part of Portobello Market, which led to an online petition and the emergence of various blogs and digital spaces, that led to a coalition of groups to contest not just this scheme, but many other issues in North Kensington, such as saving the local library from closure.

We have explored the alliances between different campaigns and community interest groups that emerged in both periods and how these alliances regenerated community-based power. In the 1960s, the privatisation of spaces and the housing problems led to the coalition of groups under the People's Association. Similarly, in the 2010s, the commodification and closure of community spaces led different initiatives to coalesce under Westway23, which simultaneously supported other campaigns to save social infrastructure in North Kensington. These groups gained capacities to take direct action and create new spaces, which provided them with agency to interact with institutions. In the 1960s, the self-build adventure playgrounds were instrumental for claiming the space under the Westway for community use. In the 2010s, during the aftermath of the Grenfell fire, years of campaigning gave community activists the capacity to set up a grassroots space for healing the trauma and for solidarity.

Our framework makes us consider what social infrastructure is, revisiting Klinenberg's (2018:5) definition of "the physical places and organisations that shape the way people interact". In North Kensington's case, it is an emergent property of a coming together of different actors, situations, processes of contestation,

objects, and spaces, which in many cases results in the formation of new spaces for gathering and new networks of solidarity. Studying these emergent or informal forms of social infrastructure responds to Latham and Layton's (2019) call for the need to study social infrastructure.

In conclusion, our article provides a glimpse into how community action contributes to the potential for social infrastructure formation. While we looked at the convergences and continuities between the two time periods, there is scope to elaborate further on the divergences and discontinuities of these periods, such as the role of technological change on the substance of social infrastructure formation. This article is a departure point for others to investigate how different combinations of activism can support the potential for social infrastructure creation.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the campaigns Westway23, Friends of North Kensington Library, and Save Wornington College for their collaboration with the UCL Civic Design Summer School. We would also like to thank Adam Ritchie for his help on reconstructing some of the events that took place in the 1960s and for the use of his photograph.

Conflict of Interest Statement

Two of the authors (Toby Laurent Belson and Marco Thomas Pircardi) have been involved in campaigning in the area of study. In particular, Toby Laurent Belson has been involved in the campaigns mentioned in this paper: Westway23, Friends of North Kensington Library, and Save Wornington College. In 2020, he was appointed as the Chair of the Westway Trust.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Endnotes

¹ A public inquiry done in the aftermath of the Grenfell fire, which took place in June 2017, where at least 72 died. For more information, see <http://grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk> (last accessed 17 July 2023).

² The Westway Trust is the non-for-profit organisation that manages the 23 acres of land below the Westway flyover on behalf of the North Kensington communities. In the following pages, the paper elaborates on the history and formation of the Westway Trust. The Tutu Foundation carried out the "Review into Institutional Racism at the Westway Trust" in 2020: <https://www.tutufoundationuk.org/westway-trust-review-launch> (last accessed 17 July 2023).

³ For photographs of the destruction of North Kensington and construction of the Westway in the late 1960s, see Walker (2013).

⁴ Correspondence with Adam Ritchie, July 2019.

⁵ Correspondence with Adam Ritchie, July 2019.

⁶ Correspondence with Adam Ritchie, July 2022.

References

- Amrani I (2017) "This is not a squat": How the Grenfell community is taking control of its destiny. *The Guardian* 13 December <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/13/this-is-not-a-squat-how-the-grenfell-community-is-taking-control-of-its-destiny> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Arendt H (1986) Communicative power. In S Lukes (ed) *Power* (pp. 59–74). Oxford: Blackwell
- Byles A and Morris P (1977) *Unmet Need: The Case of the Neighbourhood Law Centre*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Cartwright A (2020) Life between walls: Race, subdivision, and lodging houses in postwar London. *Architectural Histories* 8(1) <https://doi.org/10.5334/ah.378>
- Coley N (2015) *To the Bramley Family of Frestonia*. London: Anomie Publishing
- Connolly J (2015) UK nightclubs closing at "alarming rate", industry figures suggest. *BBC News* 10 August <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/33713015/uk-nightclubs-closing-at-alarming-rate-industry-figures-suggest> (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- Cooper G (2016) Watch protesters storm Kensington & Chelsea council chamber to disrupt meeting. *MyLondon* 30 June <https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/watch-protesters-storm-kensington--11550602> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Dahl R A (1957) The concept of power. *Behavioural Science* 2(3):201–215
- Deer B (2001) Notting Hell. *The Sunday Times* 17 June <https://briandeer.com/westway-trust.htm> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Deleuze G and Guattari F (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (trans B Massumi). London: Athlone Press
- Dent Coad E (2017) "After Grenfell: Housing and Inequality in Kensington & Chelsea —The most unequal borough in Britain'." <https://justice4grenfell.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/364307729-After-Grenfell.pdf> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Derbyshire T (2015) Protests against more Portobello redevelopment. *Antiques Trade Gazette* 22 April <https://www.antiquetrade gazette.com/news/2015/protests-against-more-portobello-redevelopment/> (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- Dovey K (2011) Uprooting critical urbanism. *City* 15(3/4):347–354
- Duncan A (1992) *Taking On the Motorway: North Kensington Amenity Trust, 21 Years*. London: Kensington & Chelsea Community History Group
- Early Action Task Force (2018) "Valuing Social Infrastructure." Community Links Early Action Task Force <http://www.civilexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Valuing-Social-Infrastructure-final.pdf> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Fals-Borda O (1987) The application of Participatory Action Research in Latin America. *International Sociology* 2(4):329–347
- Friends of North Kensington Library (2017) "Open Letter." <https://northkensingtonlibrary.org/page/letter-to-notting-hill-prep-school-limited/45> (last accessed 27 June 2023)
- Friends of North Kensington Library (2019) "No Council Response." <https://northkensingtonlibrary.org/page/2016-council-petition-response/56> (last accessed 27 June 2023)
- From The Hornets Nest (2014) More on Sarah Turvey and her battle with Westway Development Trust. 14 June <http://fromthehornetsnest.blogspot.com/2014/06/more-on-sarah-turvey-and-her-battle.html> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- From The Hornets Nest (2015a) Westway Trust...never trust 'em! 23 March <http://fromthehornetsnest.blogspot.com/2015/03/westway-trustnever-trust-em.html> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- From The Hornets Nest (2015b) Westway Trust...sheer incompetence or more gentrification? 26 March <http://fromthehornetsnest.blogspot.com/2015/03/westway-trustsheer-incompetence-or-more.html> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Gillespie T, Hardy K and Watt P (2018) Austerity urbanism and Olympic counter-legacies: Gendering, defending, and expanding the urban commons in East London. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36(5):812–830
- GLA (2015) "Westway Trust in Partnership with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea High Street Fund Application: 'Accelerating the Place'—Outputs and Outcomes

- Framework." Greater London Authority https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/2335-2.pdf (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- Gold J R (2012) A SPUR to action? The Society for the Promotion of Urban Renewal, "anti-scatter", and the crisis of city reconstruction, 1957-1963. *Planning Perspectives* 27 (2):199-223
- Gras C (2018) Adam Ritchie: From V for Victory to the Westway Blues (in B&W). *Constantine Gras Art* 13 March <https://www.grasart.com/blog/adam-ritchie-life-story-from-v-for-victory-to-the-westway-blues-in-bw> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Grenfell Action Group (2015a) Notting Hill Housing Trust does the dirty in North London. 5 March <https://grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com/2015/03/05/notting-hill-housing-trust-does-the-dirty-in-north-london/> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Grenfell Action Group (2015b) Westway Stables under threat. 24 February <https://grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com/2015/02/24/westway-stables-under-threat/> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Grenfell Action Group (2017) KCTMO—Feeling the heat! 14 March <https://grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com/2017/03/14/kctmo-feeling-the-heat/> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Griffin C (2008) *Nomads Under the Westway: Irish Travellers, Gypsies, and Other Traders in West London*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press
- Haraway D (1988) Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3):575-599
- HC Deb (1963) "Consequences of Rent Act 1957 and Property Profiteering." House of Commons Debate, 22 July <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1963/jul/22/consequences-of-rent-act-1957-and> (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- HC Deb (1972) "Greater London Council (Money) Bill (By Order)." House of Commons Debate, 20 June <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1972/jun/20/greater-london-council-money-bill-by> (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- Hitchen E and Shaw I (2019) Intervention—"Shrinking worlds: Austerity and depression". *Antipode Online* 7 March <https://antipodeonline.org/2019/03/07/shrinking-worlds-austerity-and-depression/> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Holmes C (2005) *The Other Notting Hill*. Redditch: Brevin Books
- Jenkins S (1973) The politics of London motorways. *The Political Quarterly*, 44(3):257-270
- Kensington & Chelsea Council (2019) "Council Meeting, Wednesday 23 January 2019." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWhc60vGCAQ&feature=youtu.be> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Klinenberg E (2018) *Palaces for the People: How to Build a More Equal and United Society*. London: Penguin
- Latham A and Layton J (2019) Social infrastructure and the public life of cities: Studying urban sociality and public spaces. *Geography Compass* 13(7) <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12444>
- Leech K (1988) *Struggle in Babylon: Racism in the Cities and Churches of Britain*. London: SPCK Publishing
- London School of Economics (2016) "Charles Booth's London: Poverty Maps and Police Notebooks." <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/map/14/-0.1174/51.5064/100/0> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Long J (2013) Sense of place and place-based activism in the neoliberal city: The case of "weird" resistance. *City* 17(1):52-67
- McCullough J (1978) *Meanwhile Gardens*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
- McFarlane C (2011) Assemblage and critical urbanism. *City* 15(2):204-224
- Octavia Foundation (n.d.) "Baron Baker, 1925-1996." *Waking the Dead: The Hidden Histories of Kensal Green Cemetery* <https://www.wakingthedeath.org/baron-baker.html> (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- Offord P (2018) Victory for Grenfell campaigners as FE Commissioner scraps colleges' merger. *FE Week* 27 January <https://feweek.co.uk/2018/01/27/victory-for-grenfell-campaigners-as-fe-commissioner-scraps-colleges-merger/> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- O'Malley J (1977) *The Politics of Community Action*. Nottingham: Spokesman Books

- Owen K (1987) *Our Homes, Our Streets*. London: North Kensington Local History Project
- Paget-Brown N (2016) Claims of asset stripping are junk. *Nick Notes* 20 May <https://rbkcleadersblog.wordpress.com/2016/05/20/claims-of-asset-stripping-are-junk/> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Penny J (2020) "Defend the Ten": Everyday dissensus against the slow spoiling of Lambeth's libraries. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38(5):923–940
- Power A, Belotti A, Lane L and Provan B (2018) "Private Renting: Can Social Landlords Help?" Working Paper 21, International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/101859/1/Power_Belotti_Lane_Provan_private_renting_wp21.pdf (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- Prynn J (2015) "Don't suck the lifeblood out of Portobello": Thousands sign petition against plan to redevelop vintage clothing market. *Evening Standard* 10 April <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/don-t-suck-the-lifeblood-out-of-portobello-thousands-sign-petition-against-plan-to-redevelop-vintage-10167399.html> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- RBKC (2015) "Regeneration: What It Could Mean for You—A Leaflet for Secure Tenants." Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/pdf/Regeneration%20a%20leaflet%20for%20secure%20tenants%20March%202015.pdf> (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- Rendell J (2017) 'Arry's Bar: Condensing and displacing on the Aylesbury Estate. *Journal of Architecture* 22(3):532–554
- Robinson K and Sheldon R (2019) Witnessing loss in the everydy: Community buildings in austerity Britain. *The Sociological Review* 67(1):111–125
- Scribner C, Sanguinetti G, Vague T, Barker J and Wise T (2015) *Red Army Faction, Red Brigades, Angry Brigade: The Spectacle of Terror in Post War Europe*. London: Bread and Circuses
- Sendra P (2018) Assemblages for community-led social housing regeneration: Activism, Big Society, and localism. *City* 22(5/6):738–762
- Sendra P and Sennett R (2020) *Designing Disorder: Experiments and Disruptions in the City*. London: Verso
- Sevilla-Buitrago Á (2015) Crisis and the city. Neoliberalism, austerity planning, and the production of space. In F Eckardt and J Ruiz Sánchez (eds) *City of Crisis: The Multiple Contestation of Southern European Cities* (pp. 31–52). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag
- Sullivan C (2015) "Save Portobello Road from Portobello Village/Westway Space." Petition to Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Westway Trust, 38 Degrees <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-portobello-raod-from-the-portobello-village-westway-space-1> (last accessed 13 July 2023)
- Tutu D (2004) *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time*. London: Rider
- Tutu Foundation (2020) "Review into Institutional Racism at the Westway Trust." <https://www.tutufoundationuk.org/westway-trust-review-launch> (last accessed 17 July 2023)
- UIS African-American Studies (2022) "Sankofa." African-American Studies, University of Illinois Springfield <https://www.uis.edu/africanamericanstudies/sankofa> (last accessed 14 July 2023)
- Urban Dandy London (2015a) No trust in Westway Trust? #2. 23 September <https://urbandandy london.com/2015/09/23/no-trust-in-westway-trust-2/> (last accessed 14 July 2023)
- Urban Dandy London (2015b) No trust in Westway Trust? #1. 18 September <https://urbandandy london.com/2015/09/18/no-trust-in-westway-trust-1/> (last accessed 14 July 2023)
- Vague T (2012) *Getting it Straight in Notting Hill Gate: A West London Psychogeography Report*. London: Bread and Circuses
- Walker D (2013) Building the Westway 1966–1971. *The Library Time Machine* 5 December <https://rbkcllocalstudies.wordpress.com/2013/12/05/building-the-westway-1966-1971/> (last accessed 6 July 2023)
- Watt P (2016) A nomadic war machine in the metropolis: En/countering London's 21st century housing crisis with Focus E15. *City* 20(2):297–320

- Westway23 (n.d.) "Timeline." <https://www.westway23.org/westway-timeline> (last accessed 10 February 2020)
- Westway23 (2016) "Newsletter, February 2016." <https://westway23.org/news-letter.php> (last accessed 10 February 2020)
- Westway23 (2019a) "Castaway the Colonialism." <https://westway23.org/archive/time-for-change/demands-for-radical-change/27> (last accessed 10 February 2020)
- Westway23 (2019b) "Elephants are Our Friends." <https://westway23.org/archive/time-for-change/review-into-institutional-racism/26> (last accessed 10 February 2020)