

# BIRMINGHAM

## Women and the State

Much of women's organizing was a response to the largescale clearance and redevelopment enabled by the post-war planning powers granted to Birmingham City Council from the central state.



Women at the Centre report 1989. COURTESY BfP WOMEN'S GROUP



BfP News. Source: Birmingham for People. Courtesy BfP.

## Adding women's experiences to the planning process

Although many earlier women's campaigns had been firmly self-led and independent from the City Council (the state), BfP Women's group explicitly aimed to influence policy in order for women's experiences and needs to be integrated into the future planning system.



Whilst the fractured geography of Birmingham's urban sprawl could cause disconnection between campaigns and groups, nevertheless there was some connectivity between community movements due to their common struggles against top-down modernist planning, *"there was a continuity, I don't know how much. But I think we were all influenced by a sort of critique of post-war planning as very much imposed from above"*.

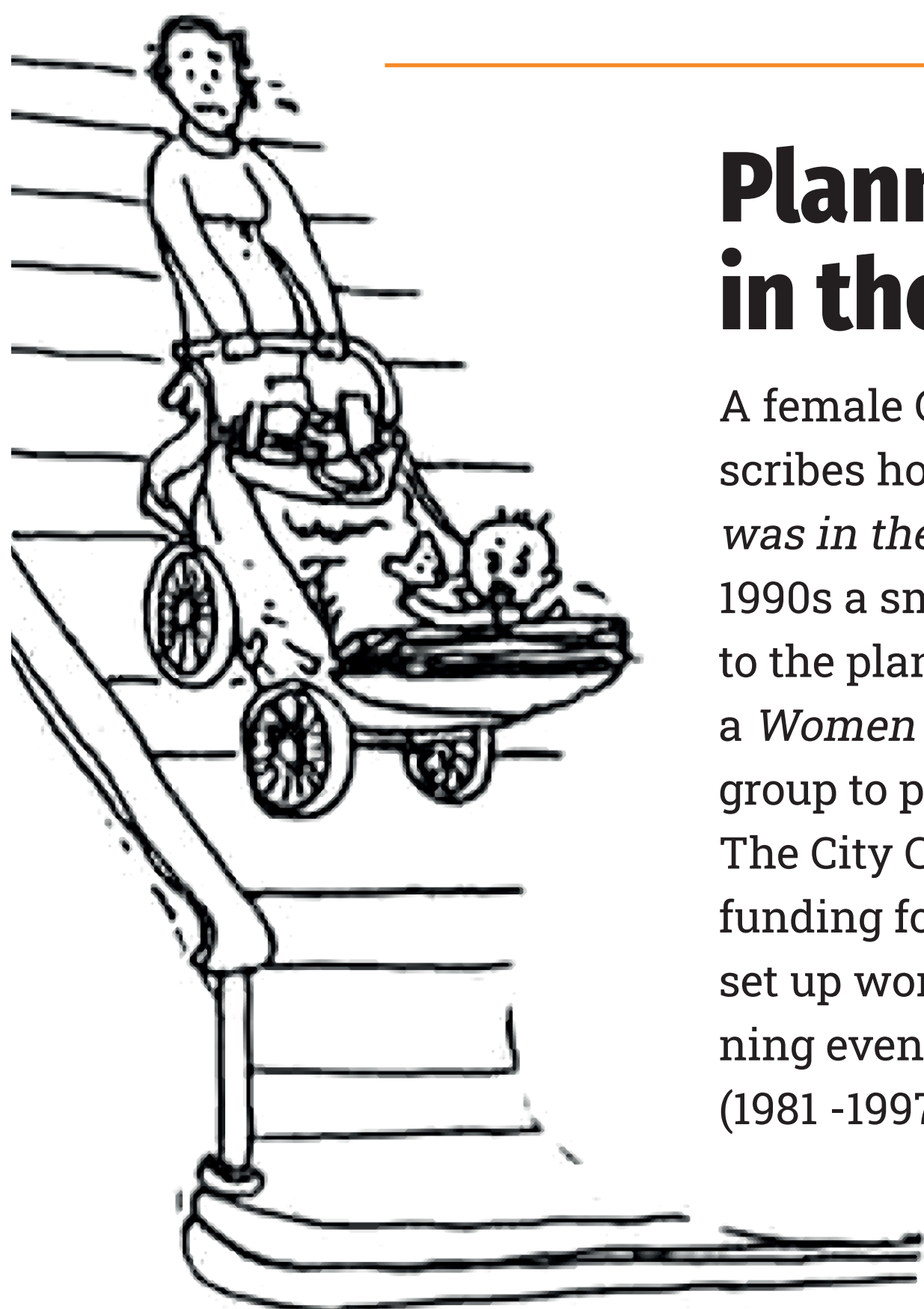
FEMALE SOCIAL HISTORIAN AND CAMPAIGNER.

BfP Womens' Group led the Transport, Environment and Planning Task Group for the inter-agency Forum on Women's Safety, set up in 1991 as a joint initiative with Birmingham City Council. This gave BfP Women's group *"access to decision-makers in the Council via a wide range of Council committees now engaging issues of women's safety"*. (BfP NEWS, 1991)

To build influence and access resources, BfP Women's Group were key players in alliances involving the City Council, such as the City Council Women's Unit, Department of Planning and Architecture, the Community Safety Unit and Safe Estate for Women (SEW).



BfP Newsletter header (1990-1993)



## Planning was in the air

A female City Council planner describes how *"women and planning was in the air at the time"*, and in the 1990s a small pot of money was given to the planning department to form a *Women in Planning* consultation group to promote women in planning. The City Council also provided some funding for BfP Women's Group and set up womens' participatory planning events via their Women's Unit (1981 -1997).



Women in Planning. PHOTO COURTESY CHRIS GREEN

