

BIRMINGHAM

Women's Hidden Histories

Women's planning needs and struggles are often hidden from history. Birmingham for People Women's Group worked from 1989 to the mid 1990s to ensure women's voices and needs were included in the planning of the city. These panels bring this story to light.

WEB - Women & the Built Environment, Autumn issue 1990
p.26. COURTESY OF BfP WOMEN'S GROUP.

I would like to express my support for *Birmingham for People Women's Group*. It makes me very angry that we only hear about the rich, male business visitors who come to Birmingham to spend money and create jobs for women as chambermaids and prostitutes.

Clare Short, MP for Ladywood, Birmingham, 3rd June 1989



Women's voices can be lost even within community campaigns...

“Right from the beginning I was quite critical of how the men's voices were heard and women's voices weren't. So a group of women emerged from the Birmingham for People group to set up a separate group... to carve out a role for ourselves.” (BfP WOMEN'S GROUP).

Women	
✓ Married women workers' jobs	B'tam Mail June 12th 1945
✓ Nursery schools	May 1st 1945
✓ Women's needs	April 26th 1945
✓ Nurseries	Sept 19th 1945
✓ Married women workers' jobs	Oct 5th 1945
✓ Women in post-war world - role	Oct 18th 1945
✓ Married women workers' - unreliability	Oct 19th
✓ The housewife's task - booking, menus	Oct 23rd
✓ No studies Please! - bar on serving women	Oct 24th
* Equal Pay - Rert Pearce	Dec 12th
	Jan 12th 1946
	Feb 8th

Research notes on women's issues covered in 1945
Birmingham Mail. SOURCE & COURTESY OF JUDE BLOOMFIELD

A Circularity of Struggle

BfP Women's Group wanted women's experiences to be integrated into mainstream planning processes, but instead we see a circularity whereby the same issues are fought for again and again, with demands re-emerging in different parts of the city at different times. Ideas and struggles can be lost between generations as constant redevelopment and changing governments erase previous wins. This means that the historical thread of women's community planning is more of a circularity based on repetition, rather than a linearity marking progress: a sporadic and repetitive history shaped by erasure and forgetfulness – yet kept alive by women's determination, imagination and solidarity that continue to drive women's demands for a people-friendly city.

- Bull Ring plan given thumbs down
- City wants 'more human' scheme

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

● Out: Bull Ring of future.

Daily News 1989. Courtesy Jude Bloomfield.



Spaces of Hope workshop with Birmingham women 2022. SOURCE DEBBIE HUMPHRY

Hidden histories

Hidden within women's hidden histories are those of black and brown women. Unfortunately, even our own workshops

had limited engagement from diverse ethnic groups, which we are seeking to redress through a follow-on project in Birmingham on spaces of safety and joy.

