

to penetrate. One study has shown, for example, that town planners quite clearly use different values about architecture to the public they serve (Hubbard 1996). The difficulty we have here is that planners are supposed to protect the public from wilful architects, who in turn present themselves as designing for society at large rather than just their clients! Architects have also defended their professional status on the grounds that they champion the quality of the environment on behalf of all of us. This seems to be the main justification for the Act of Parliament in the UK, recently revised, which legally protects the title of 'architect'. Wilson has, however, shown that, in spite of much rhetoric to the contrary, architects do indeed seem to use quite different evaluative systems to others (Wilson 1996). She has also shown that this tendency is significantly acquired during higher education, and that there is a strong correlation between the architectural preferences expressed by students within a school of architecture. Depressingly, her data also show these preferences to be strongly linked to stylistic attributes. This suggests that even now schools of architecture knowingly or otherwise still teach architectural style!

I have tried throughout this book not to take such a stance. Of course I too have my stylistic preferences and my weaknesses for some periods of history, particular architects and certain building materials. However, I have tried not to present any of these as somehow endowed with special value or having a fundamental rightness. This treatise then, like all others I have ever read about architecture, is extremely limited! It presents one way of looking at the forms and spaces that comprise architecture. It views them not as abstractions but as expressions of ourselves. It explores the deep needs and compulsions we feel, which frequently we are unable to express in more explicit and conventional language. Indeed, it views our behaviour in space and the architecture that contains it as part of a vital language that is central to human communication. Consequently, this book does not only look at our relationship with architecture but at the way architecture mediates our relationships with each other. Harold Proshansky, one of the pioneers of environmental psychology, is quoted at the top of this chapter expressing the view that buildings are as much a social as a physical phenomenon (Proshansky, Ittleson and Rivlin 1970). Tom Markus, in his fascinating treatise on 'buildings and power', takes an even firmer view of this (Markus 1993):

I take the stand that buildings are not primarily art, technical or investment objects, but social objects.

Of course, places are often very complex in terms of the opportunities they afford us for analysis. Two people visiting the same place at different times in their lives may be able to extract quite different character from it. In their study of how boys perceive places as they grow,