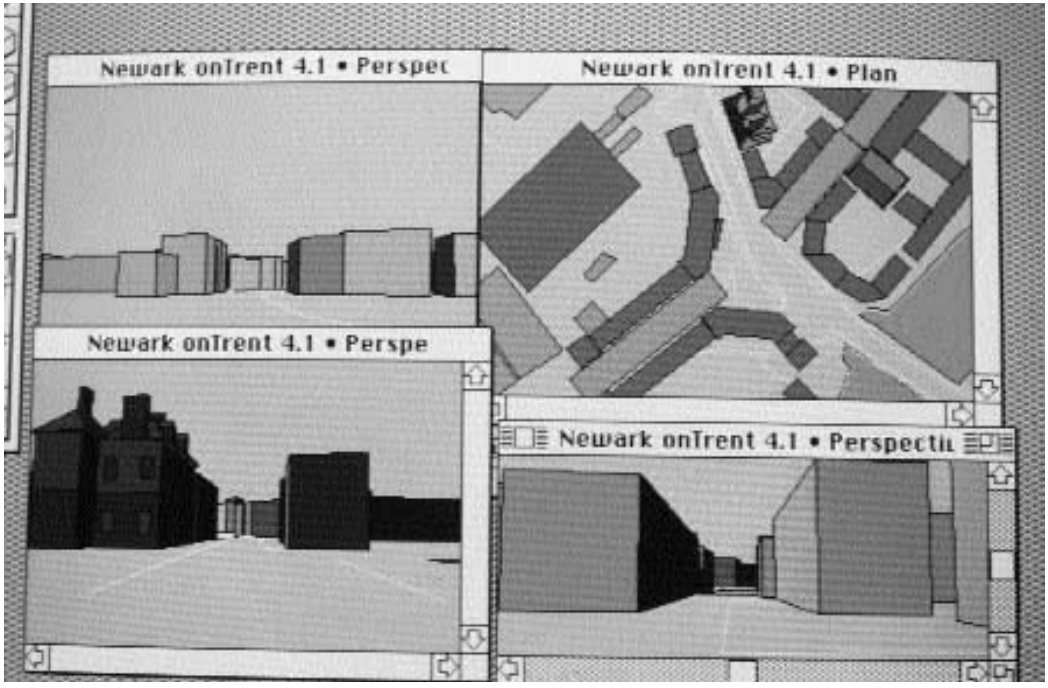

Figure 7.17 Computer model of Newark, Nottinghamshire: student project, The Institute of Planning Studies, The University of Nottingham, by Peter Whitehouse.

Such computer simulations of the city will soon be as important to urban design as computer-simulated flight to the pilot. A three-dimensional computer model of Bath includes the whole of the Georgian city, the commercial and business centres, a large part of the residential area and a three-dimensional terrain model of the surrounding countryside. The model is made up of 150 sub-models, each of which is about the size of a city block. An important use of the model is in development control where the effect of any proposed development can be examined to determine how it affects neighbouring buildings, public space or the rural skyline, which is so important in Bath's setting (Figure 7.18).

The urban computer model presents a way of analysing the present form of development, the impacts of proposed developments and assessing future possibilities. It is also potentially a technique whereby the whole community can 'focus and articulate its thoughts on how urban growth and change can be accommodated'.[13]

The preparation of drawings, reports and models is the responsibility of professional architects, planners and urban designers. At this stage in the design process, the role of members of the public is to receive information, to hear the evidence, to understand the main arguments for the proposal and to see the implications of the proposed development. This understanding may be impaired for those with defective vision. An estimated 250 000 people in Britain have a partial, but nonetheless disabling, loss of vision which cannot be corrected by ordinary spectacles. This may even include senior decision makers whose vision is failing through age. For this section of the community the task of reading documents and visual displays can