

this, who assured me that the reason was that higher speed film had to be used if people were moving about in a scene and with this came increased granularity and therefore loss of picture quality. Clearly the editors of architectural journals think that picture quality is more important than picture content. This book questions this set of values and the attitude behind it that leads architects away from understanding their clients and users.

I find that undergraduate students of architecture come to university with a very wide range of expectations. Gradually during their studies many seem to learn to match their expectations about architecture with those of their tutors. As a young student myself I failed to do this. I found my education at Oxford focused entirely on buildings as physical objects. Mainly they were thought of as visual objects in a very abstract sort of way, with some occasional minor consideration of them as technical constructions. I continued to wish to see them as social objects, and gathered daily evidence of this as I looked at the many magnificent buildings in that wonderful city. I learned about architecture not through the glossy pictures in books, but by actually observing buildings being used. Consequently I grew impatient with my college studies, and some, though thankfully not all, of my tutors grew impatient with me!

It was this that drove me to study psychology for my masters and doctoral degrees. It has since taken many years of study in the field to put all this into some semblance of balance, and this book represents an attempt to help others who may wish to follow a similar path. However, I hope this does not read as a deeply theoretical book. After a lifetime of trying to understand architecture, I find it quite difficult enough without theories that seem only to obscure and overcomplicate. As a young research student I had been looking forward for some time to hearing a lecture by one of our leading and most influential ergonomists, who was due to visit the university where I was studying psychology. At the time I was deeply disappointed by his lecture, and was arrogant and impudent enough to express this in a question at the end of his talk. I said that it seemed to me that what he had taken over an hour to say boiled down to 'put dials where people can see them and controls where people can operate them'. He was surprisingly delighted with my impertinent question. 'Yes, you have it exactly', he said in a congratulatory sort of way, 'the trouble is though that we all know this and yet designers keep not doing it. That is why I have to keep telling them to!'. His answer of course makes another important point for us here. The vast majority of what I shall say in this book is known and understood by you already. You know it because you rely on an implicit understanding of the language of space for everyday life. Yet every year I find that young students of design, when they enter their