

resource efficiency, cleanliness and personal safety already feature strongly in many political programmes nationally and globally in a way that permeability, variety, legibility and robustness do not! The following section considers how urban designers are located within this wider political frame of reference and explores how this affects their ability to achieve the values and qualities discussed.

Where the power lies

The notions of social gain, community benefit and the public interest have featured largely in the rhetoric of the environmental professions. In the absence of explicitly stated values and objectives, professionals have been content to restrict evaluation primarily to their peer group, one which unsurprisingly is likely to share the same implicit value system. The history of the planning and architecture of post-war social housing is a good example of well-intentioned and socially conscious professionals making expansive claims of social and community benefit which the everyday experience of users has emphatically challenged.

In order to be able to develop an alternative evaluative process, we must be willing to make clear

and explicit statements of the values which underpin our design proposals. We must be willing and able to open up the design and decision making process to as wide a group of interests as possible and to develop methods which will facilitate a genuinely exploratory and interactive debate about this process. Lastly, we must be willing to identify who gains and who loses in this process.

The 'powergram' (McGlynn, 1993) shown in Figure 33.1 was designed to highlight both the very real conflict of values in the development process, and the huge potential to disadvantage the user groups because of the uneven distribution of power inherent in our political economy. On the vertical axis of the matrix are listed the physical components of the built environment which form the substance of negotiation and bargaining between actors in the design and development process. On the horizontal axis are the major actors in this process, categorized into the 'suppliers' of the basic commodities of development such as land and capital; the 'producers' from developers through to local government, the professional groups and urban designers; and lastly the 'consumers'—that is everyone who uses the environment. The diagram makes distinctions between actors who can exercise *power* to initiate or control development, actors who have a legal or contractual

Actors	Suppliers		Producers					Consumers
	Land owner	Funder	Developer	Local authority		Architects	Urban designers	Everyday users
				Planners	Highway engineers			
Street pattern	–	–	○	○	●	–	○	○
Blocks	–	–	–	–	–	–	○	–
Plots – subdivision & amalgamation	●	●	●	○ (in U.K.)	–	–	○	–
Land/building use	●	●	●	●	⊕	○	○	○
Building form – height/mass	–	●	●	●	–	⊕	○	○
– orientation to public space	–	–	○	⊕	–	–	○	○
– elevations	–	○	○	●	–	⊕	○	○
– elements of construction (details/materials)	–	○	●	⊕	–	⊕	○	○

Key: ● Power—either to initiate or control. ○ Interest/influence—by argument or participation only
 ⊕ Responsibility—legislative or contractual – No obvious interest

FIGURE 33.1 A 'powergram' for urban design (Source: McGlynn, 1993).