This fact is often forgotten in schools of design. For Green, the development of design skills is more like the acquisition of language, in that it is a continual process beginning in early childhood. Certainly young children love arranging and rearranging their possessions. This activity is itself part of the process through which we learn not only to classify and categorise, but also to express ourselves. Just as we acquire larger vocabularies and become more fluent in our use of language, so Green argues, do we develop in design.

Although in the UK we have research councils for engineering, physical and social science, the natural environment, medicine, and even an Arts Council, we have no organisation for funding work which might benefit design. Whilst the learning and use of language has long been a field of study, relatively little has been done to understand our development as designers. Indeed design is generally taken for granted in our society and design skills are perhaps rather undervalued. As we grow up, language is taught in a formal and structured way and the study of language is legitimised by its place in our school curricula. Until recently, design was hardly taught at all in schools in the UK. Bits of activity in art, craft, music, drama and other subjects could be said to encourage design abilities, but there was no integrated approach to the teaching of design. At last, the syllabus for the fourteen-year-old child has begun at least optionally, to include design subjects, but there are still blank years from the start of schooling at about aged five when design is hardly taught at all. Perhaps this is another reason why ordinary people sometimes feel a little intimidated by professional designers.

Design games

So it is important to recognise that design is a natural activity and that design students come to their courses prepared through childhood to design. Many have therefore argued that design education should in some way continue this process as well as professionalising it. For some, this implies the use of games. It is through play that children acquire so many of the skills vital to adult life, but the formal use of games as educational tools is a relatively recent phenomenon. This sort of educational game is usually intended not only to develop an appreciation of a problem, but also to explore it in a social context in which the roles of

the players are seen as a legitimate field of study (Taylor and Walford 1972):

> The behaviour and the interaction of players in a game can possibly involve competition co-operation, conflict or even collusion, but it is usually limited or partially prescribed. An initial situation is identified and some direction given about the way the simulation is expected to work. Some games nevertheless are still primarily concerned with the desire to 'understand the decision making process', as in role-play; others, however, may be moving towards a prime desire to 'understand the model' or examine the process which the game itself represents.

As we have seen throughout this book, design cannot be practised in a social vacuum. Indeed it is the very existence of the other players such as clients, users and legislators which makes design so challenging. Merely working for yourself can be seen more as an act of creating art in a self-expressionist manner. So design itself must be seen to include the whole gamut of social skills that enable us either to negotiate a consensus, or to give a lead. This in turn implies the existence of tension and even conflict. There is no point denying the effect of such interpersonal role-based conflicts on design.

Designers seek to impose their own order and express their own feelings through design. This is not just pure wilfulness, as some would have it, but a necessary process of self-development through each project, and in many cases a need to maintain an identifiable image to prospective clients. The client, however, is often ambivalent here. Certainly the client is in control in the sense that the commission originates from, and the payment is made by, the client, but in every other respect the designer takes the initiative. The more famous and celebrated the designer, the greater the client's risk, for such designers live in the glare of publicity and are unlikely to wish to compromise their stance. Client/designer tension then is inevitable and an integral part of the problem. In those forms of design where clients are not users, an added element of tension is likely not only between the client body and the users, but also between user groups. Indeed in this case it is actually the designer's job to uncover this tension; a process which can make for an uncomfortable life. I remember only too well working hard to resolve the deep underlying tensions between doctors, nurses and administrators when designing hospitals. Probably one of the most recorded and romantic design processes of the twentieth century was that of the Sydney Opera House. The fact that the architect walked out of the project, that the client had to raise huge additional funds, that a major contractor went financially