Figure 14.1
Two of three alternative schemes developed by a team of clients and designers over a three-day period for St Mary's Hospital in the Isle of Wight

Group dynamics

All these ideas in some way depend on the concept of a group, which acts not just as a collection of individuals, but also in a manner somehow beyond the abilities of the collective individual talents. This concept resembles the Gestalt psychologists' view as 'the whole being different from the sum of the parts', although in this case it is clearly the relationships between the parts which
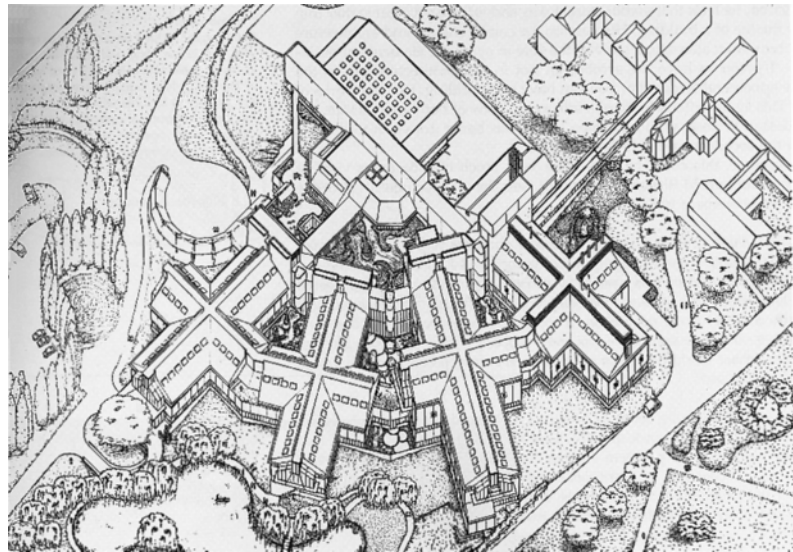
Figure 14.2
The selected scheme worked up
later in the design process

contribute most to that difference. Groups as social and psycho-
logical phenomena have been studied and written about perhaps
as much as any aspect of human behaviour, and there are too
many perspectives on the group for us to deal with such an idea
more than very briefly here. However, from what has already been
discussed in this chapter, it seems at least sensible that designers
should be aware of the way their thinking might be affected by
group behaviour, and of the way in which they can influence the
thinking of other members of groups within which they work.

Much effort has been expended, in the literature on groups, on
attempts to define the word itself. As a consequence we are prob-
ably more confused now than ever before, but Hare's (1962)
description of why a group is not just a collection of individuals will
probably serve our purpose here.

> There are then in sum, five characteristics which distinguish the group
> from a collection of individuals. The members of the group are in inter-
> action with one another. They share a common goal and set of norms,
> which give direction and limits to their activity. They also develop a set
> of roles and a network of interpersonal attraction, which serve to differ-
> entiate themselves from other groups.

This introduces us to a number of notions which are central to the
understanding of group behaviour, the perception of goals, the
development of norms, and the characteristics of interpersonal
relationships. These ideas are in reality all so interwoven as to be
impossible to separate sensibly other than for the purposes of