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Introduction

Put a group of architects, urban designers and planners in a sight-seeing bus and their actions will define the limits of their concerns. The architects will take photographs of buildings, or highways or bridges. The urban designers will wait for that moment when all three are juxtaposed. The planners will be too busy talking to look out of the window.

Denise Scott Brown, *AD Urban Concepts*

To regard thinking as a skill rather than a gift is the first step towards doing something to improve that skill.

Edward de Bono, *Practical Thinking*

Design

The very word 'design' is the first problem we must confront in this book since it is in everyday use and yet given quite specific and different meanings by particular groups of people. We might begin by noting that 'design' is both a noun and a verb and can refer either to the end product or to the process. Relatively recently the word 'designer' has even become an adjective rather than a noun. Although on the one hand this can be seen to trivialise design to the status of mere fashion, this adjectival use implies something that will be important to us in this book. It implies that not all design is equally valuable and that perhaps the work of some designers is regarded as more important. In this book we shall not be studying how design can offer us the fashion accessory. In fact we shall not be much concerned directly with the end products of design. This book is primarily about design as a process. We shall be concerned with how that process works, what we understand about it and do not, and how it is learned and performed by professionals and experts. We shall be interested in how the process can be supported with computers and by working in groups. We