architects illustrate this variation. Sir Denys Lasdun clearly sees the architect as having a responsibility to lead the client forward:

> Our job is to give the client not what he wants but what he never even dreamt he wanted . . . what I have previously said about the client affects the methodology of design.
>
> (Lasdun 1965)

By contrast at around the same time, Sir Basil Spence was to portray the architect as a 'tailor who measures the thin chap and the fat chap and makes them both comfortable'. For Spence the architect was most definitely not a reformer.

I have found that one of the characteristics which many very good designers share in common is the extent to which they focus on the client and see the client playing a role in the very design process itself. Certainly a supportive and understanding client can make an enormous difference to the success of a project, as Michael Wilford has pointed out:

> Behind every building of distinction is an equally distinctive client, not necessarily high profile, but one who takes the time and trouble to comprehend the ideas of the architect, is supportive and enthusiastic, who is bold, willing to take risks and above all can hold his or her nerve during the inevitable crises.
>
> (Wilford 1991)

A heartfelt plea to the client for this understanding comes from Denise Scott Brown who talks of the client 'letting you be on their side'. Her partner, Robert Venturi explains how important and yet delicate this can be:

> you need not to worry about saying something stupid . . . you need sometimes to think out loud and be free to say stupid things . . . and if the client has faith this can often lead to something . . . we think that architecture has to derive from collaboration and we learn a lot from the client . . . we get some of our best ideas from clients, we love collaborating with them.
>
> (Lawson 1994)

Perhaps only the best designers have the confidence to allow their clients into what is a delicate and easily disturbed creative process.

Users

As we have already seen, the needs of the clients of design and the users of design are not always exactly the same. If a designer is lucky,

the client will express a single clear view on all matters relating to the brief, although this is by no means always the case. Users, however, are all different and likely to make differing demands on the final design. The different kinds of users involved in buildings often makes this extremely complex. In designing hospitals for example, I often found that what seemed to be convenient for the nursing staff was rather disliked by the patients. In investigating buildings in use I have found that what students think makes a good lecture theatre can be almost diametrically opposed to the views of their lecturers (Lawson and Spencer 1978). Herman Hertzberger positively revels in this mass of conflicting demands since his guiding principles are built around a general concern for the inhabitants of buildings as people rather than as representatives of the roles they play (Fig. 10.3). Resolving the potential conflicts between these roles appeals to him:

> I prefer, for instance, to make a school over making a house, because the house I feel has too much of a constraint just to follow the particularity and idiosyncrasy of just one person or couple. I prefer to have a school where you have a board, you have teachers, you have parents and you have children, and the users are all of them.
>
> (Lawson 1994b)

In architecture, then, there are sometimes opportunities to involve the users of buildings in the design process. One of the most

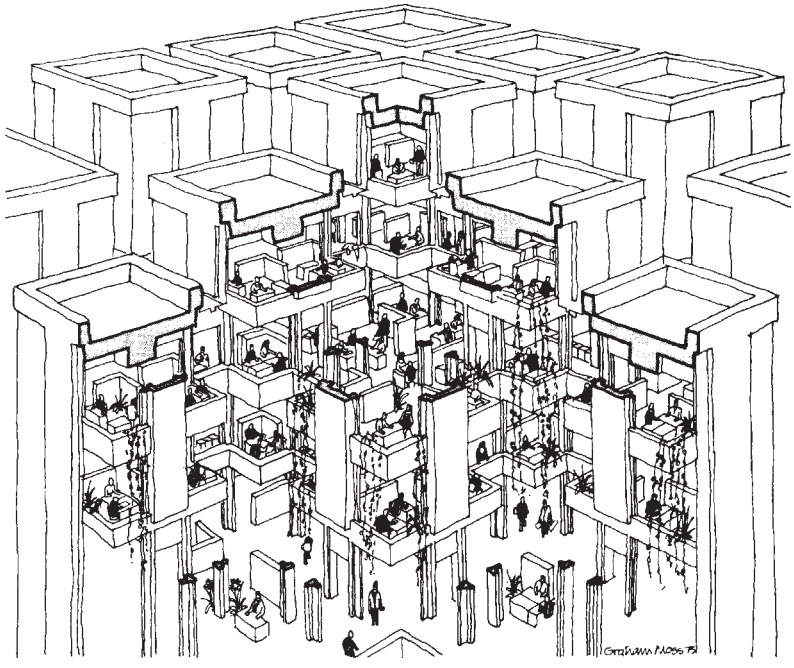

Figure 10.3
Herman Hertzberger's famous office building for Centraal Beheer at Appledorn in Holland is an example of a user-centred approach to architecture