

# What Is A Good Building?

**Adrian Leaman**

Prepared for PLEA 2017

20 minute timeslot

# Prologue

Ivor Cutler

“A man who captures dreich like no one on earth.” (Billy Connelly)

Stickies

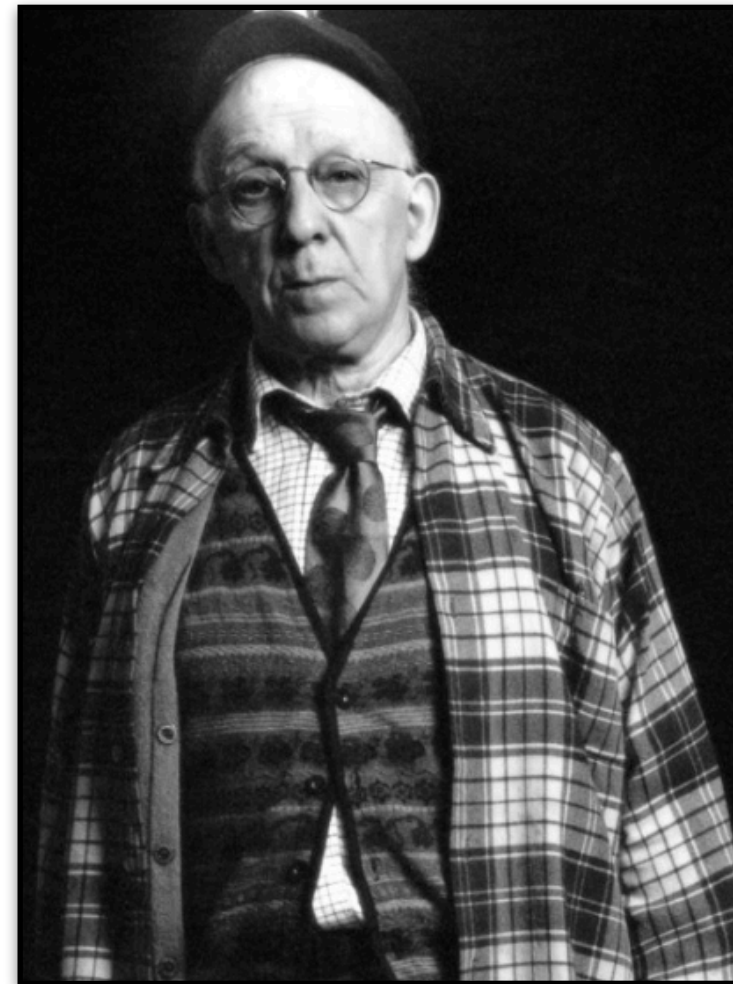
Slightly imperfect

## Dreich Synonyms

black, bleak, cheerless, chill, Cimmerian, cloudy, cold, comfortless, dark, darkening, depressing, depressive, desolate, dire, disconsolate, dismal, drear, dreary, gloomy [*chiefly Scottish*], elegiac (*also elegiacal*), forlorn, funereal, glum, godforsaken, gray (*also grey*), lonely, lonesome, lugubrious, miserable, morbid, morose, murky, plutonian, saturnine, sepulchral, solemn, somber (*or sombre*), sullen, sunless, tenebrific, tenebrous, wretched

## Antonyms

bright, cheerful, cheering, cheery, comforting, cordial, festive, friendly, gay, heartwarming, sunshiny



# A good building ...

Utilises and enhances locational potential.

*Potential*

Avoids unmanageable complexity.

*Complexity*

Minimises unnecessary dependencies.

*Dependencies*

Offers options to users and managers, so is flexible and/or adaptable within reason.

*Options*

Communicates design intent to its users and managers.

*Design Intent*

Meets basic needs unobtrusively.

*Needs*

Is not hostage to management or design fantasies.

*Hostage*

Remembers its past.

*Remembers past*

Recognises constraints realistically, and utilises them to advantage.

*Constraints recognised*

Anticipates risks and consequences.

*Consequences*

# Flamborough Head Lighthouse





# Bonfield Ghyll hill farm



# Woodland Trust Headquarters Office





1 Utilises and enhances locational potential.

*The whole point*

2 Avoids unmanageable complexity.

*Clockwork with keeper, then electric, then automated.*

3 Minimises unnecessary dependencies.

*Back up generators?*

4 Offers options to users and managers, so is flexible and/or adaptable within reason.

*Single-issue purpose restricts long-term adaptability potential.*

5 Communicates design intent to its users and managers.

*Users are seafarers. 24 n. mile visibility.*

6 Meets basic needs unobtrusively.

*This one meets basic needs very obtrusively. Exception that proves rule.*

7 Is not hostage to management or design fantasies.

*Engineer-led. Trinity House functionality.*

8 Remembers its past.

*Visitor centre now incorporated. Grade II\* listed.*

9 Recognises constraints realistically, and utilises them to advantage.

*Version of point 1.*

10 Anticipates risks and consequences.

*Super robust. High degree of redundancy. Failure not an option.*



1 Utilises and enhances locational potential.

*Marginal hill farm. National Trust landlord.*

2 Avoids unmanageable complexity.

*Off-grid. Archimedes Screw 1 kw generator.*

3 Minimises unnecessary dependencies.

*Reliant on enduring local community ties but economically dependent on handouts.*

4 Offers options to users and managers, so is flexible and/or adaptable within reason.

*Farm tenants skilled and self-reliant.*

5 Communicates design intent to its users and managers.

*“This is a hill farm, plain and simple”.*

6 Meets basic needs unobtrusively.

*Merges into landscape, invisibly to many.  
Extreme weather*

7 Is not hostage to management or design fantasies.

*Unpretentious vernacular building in stone with pantiles.*

8 Remembers its past.

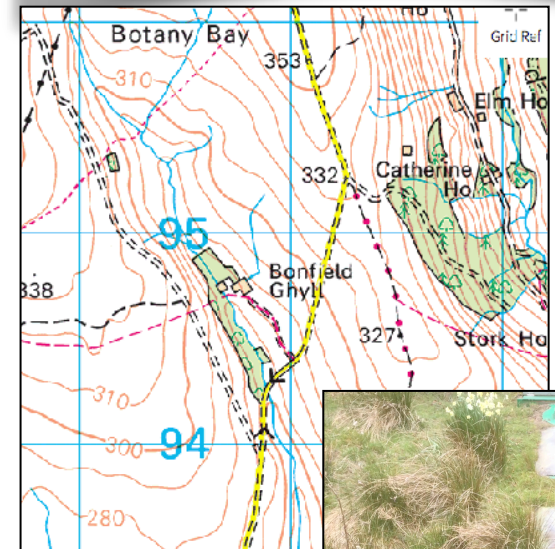
*Oral history tradition survives.*

9 Recognises constraints realistically, and utilises them to advantage.

*Based on sheep economy, but constantly searching for exploiting opportunities.*

10 Anticipates risks and consequences.

*Mindset of farmer, constantly evaluating risks and rewards.*





1 Utilises and enhances locational potential.

*Business Park in Grantham. Aesthetics help here.*

2 Avoids unmanageable complexity.

*Uses 'Soft Landings' protocols. Careful and extensive briefing and handover process*

3 Minimises unnecessary dependencies.

*High (AC) server room dependency*

4 Offers options to users and managers, so is flexible and/or adaptable within reason.

*Mixed-mode, with mainly natural ventilation, views out, reasonable occupant density but noisy.*

5 Communicates design intent to its users and managers.

*Care taken with control systems (lighting and ventilation), but still progress to be made.*

6 Meets basic needs unobtrusively.

*Lack of storage, meeting rooms, unisex toilets, can be too cold/too hot. Otherwise liked.*

7 Is not hostage to management or design fantasies.

*Mutative rather than imposed design with collaborative briefing.*

8 Remembers its past.

*Briefing and design draws on Max Fordham / Feilden Clegg Bradley's experience at The Heelis.*

9 Recognises constraints realistically, and utilises them to advantage.

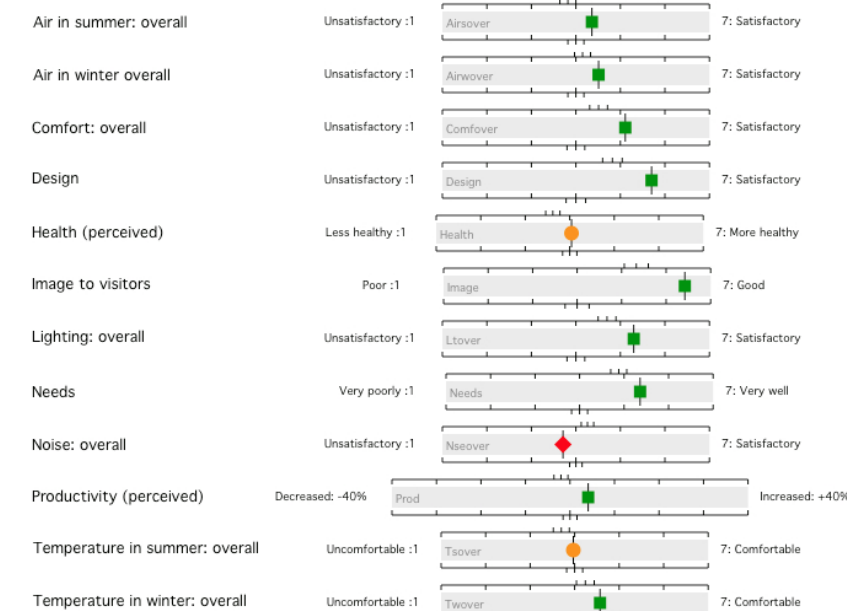
*IT main stumbling block.*

10 Anticipates risks and consequences.

*A model example of care with use of feedback but can never be perfect.*



Summary (Overall variables)



2012

Air in summer: overall



Air in winter overall



Comfort: overall



Design



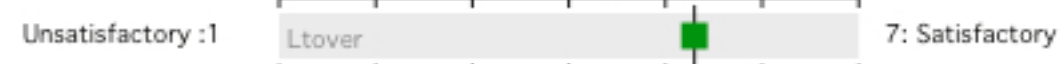
Health (perceived)



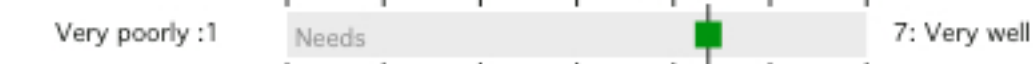
Image to visitors



Lighting: overall



Needs



Noise: overall



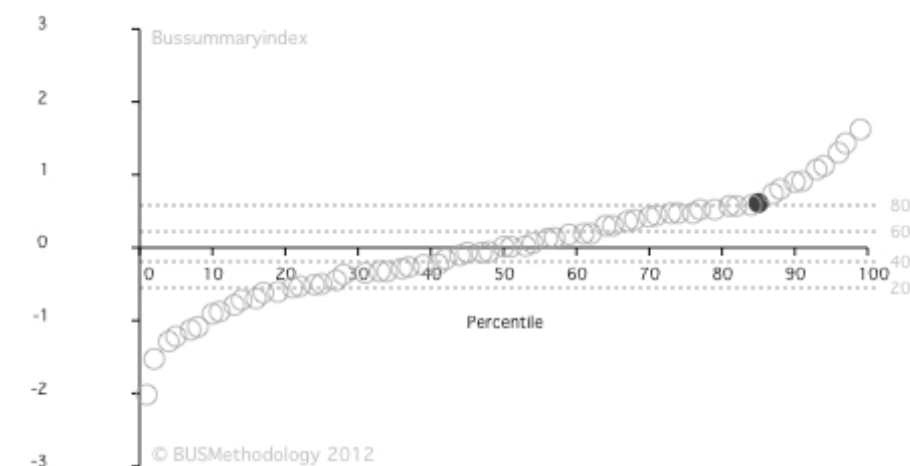
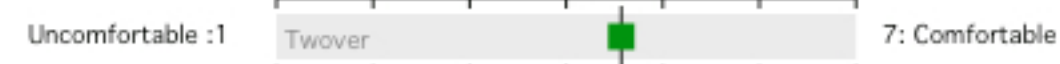
Productivity (perceived)



Temperature in summer: overall



Temperature in winter: overall



Study mean: 0.64 | Study building percentile: 85 | Quintile: 5  
Building code: 11391  
Web content © BUSMethodology 2012



# Summary (Overall variables)

2015

Air in summer: overall



Air in winter overall



Comfort: overall



Design



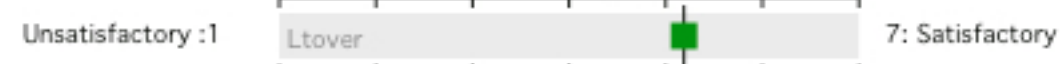
Health (perceived)



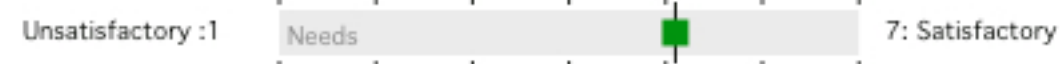
Image to visitors



Lighting: overall



Needs



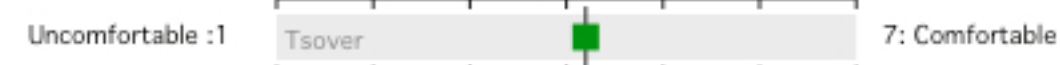
Noise: overall



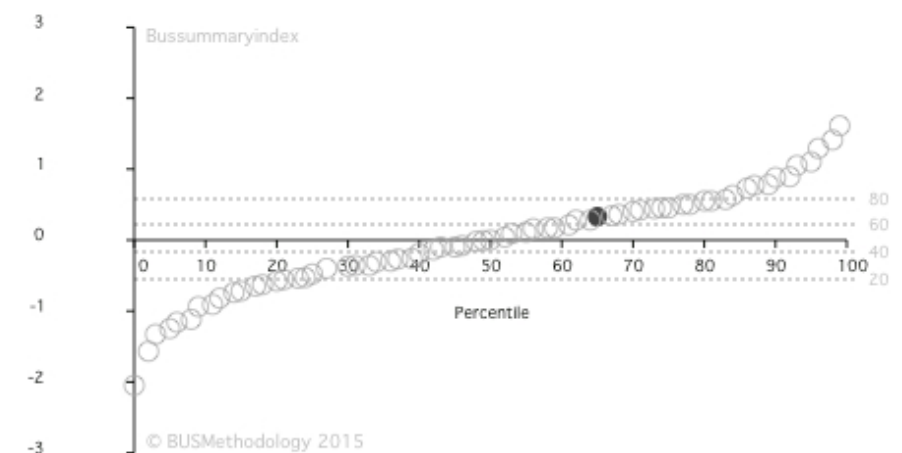
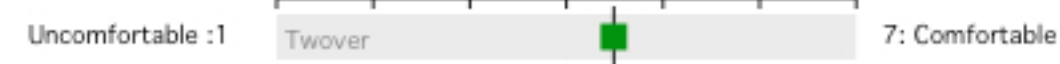
Productivity (perceived)



Temperature in summer: overall



Temperature in winter: overall



Study mean: 0.36 | Study building percentile: 65 | Quintile: 4  
Building code: 13841  
Web content © BUSMethodology 2015

## Electricity consumption at Heelis and The Woodland Trust

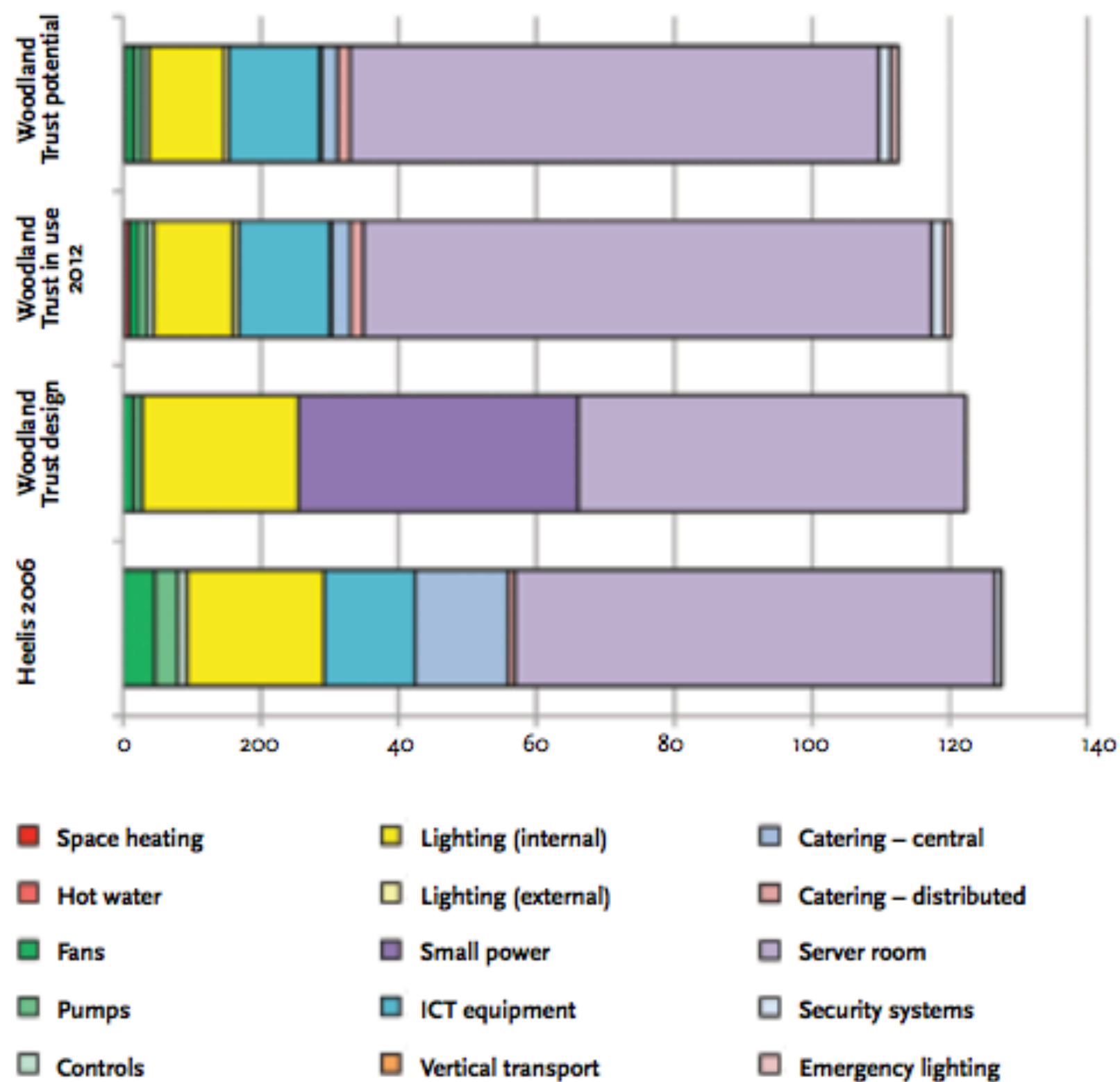


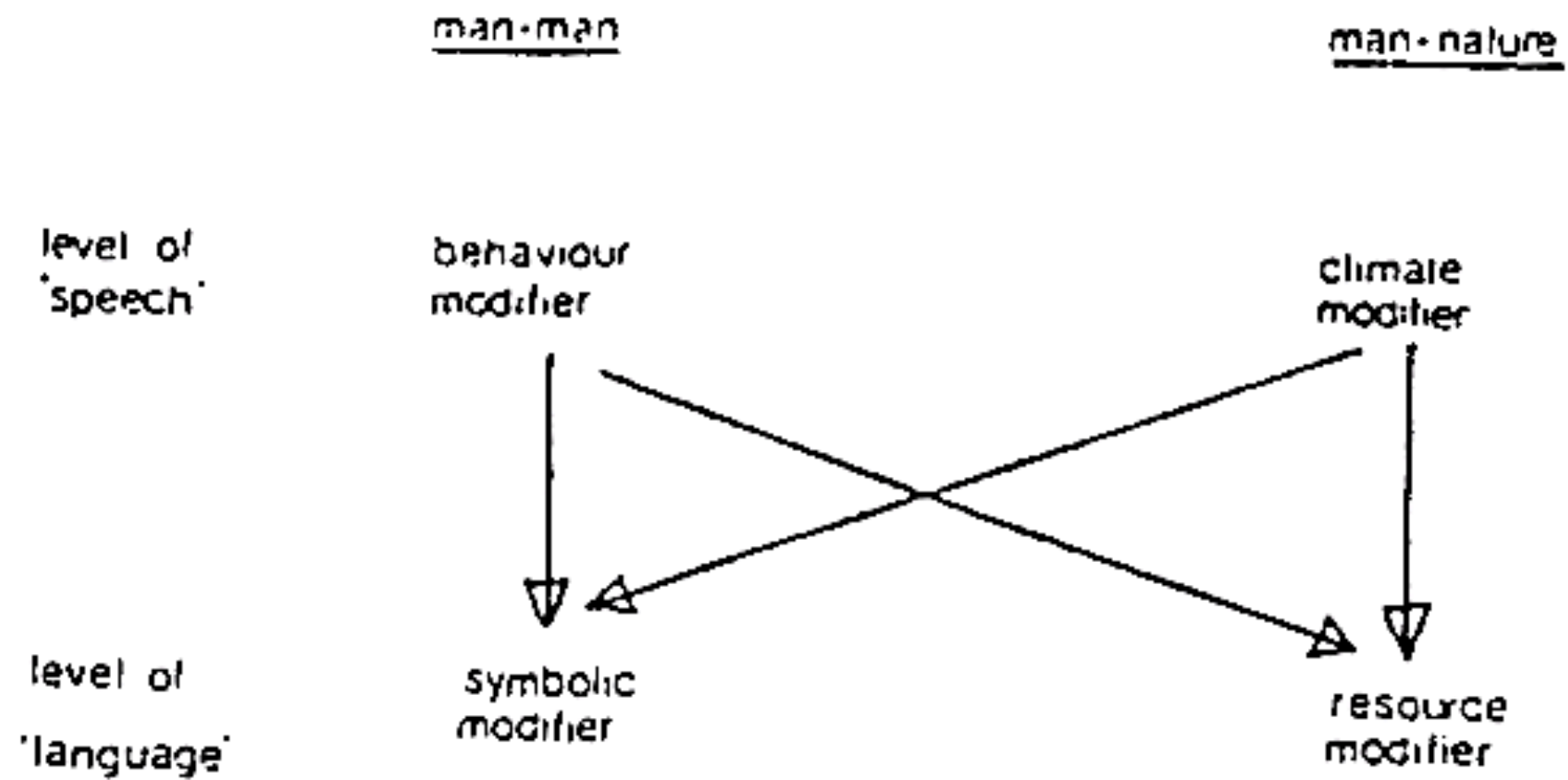
Figure 2: Annual electricity consumption kWh/m², broken down by end use



**Additional material  
for questions, discussion or  
under-time.**



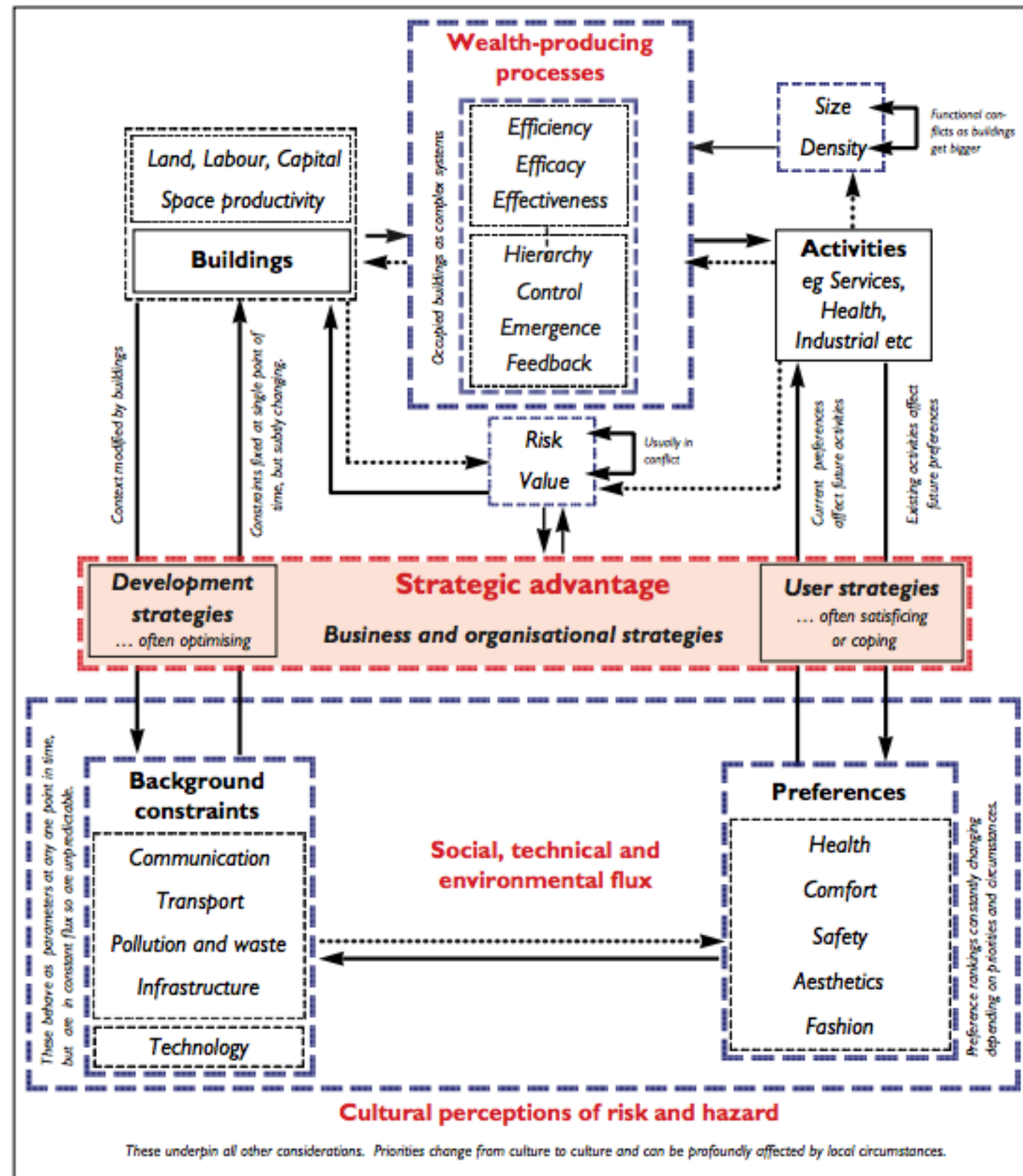
Source: How to Downsize a Transport Network: The Chinese Wheelbarrow; Kris de Decker, Low-Tech Magazine <http://www.lowtechmagazine.com>



Hiller B and Leaman A: How Is Design Possible, Journal of Architectural Research, 3/1, 1974



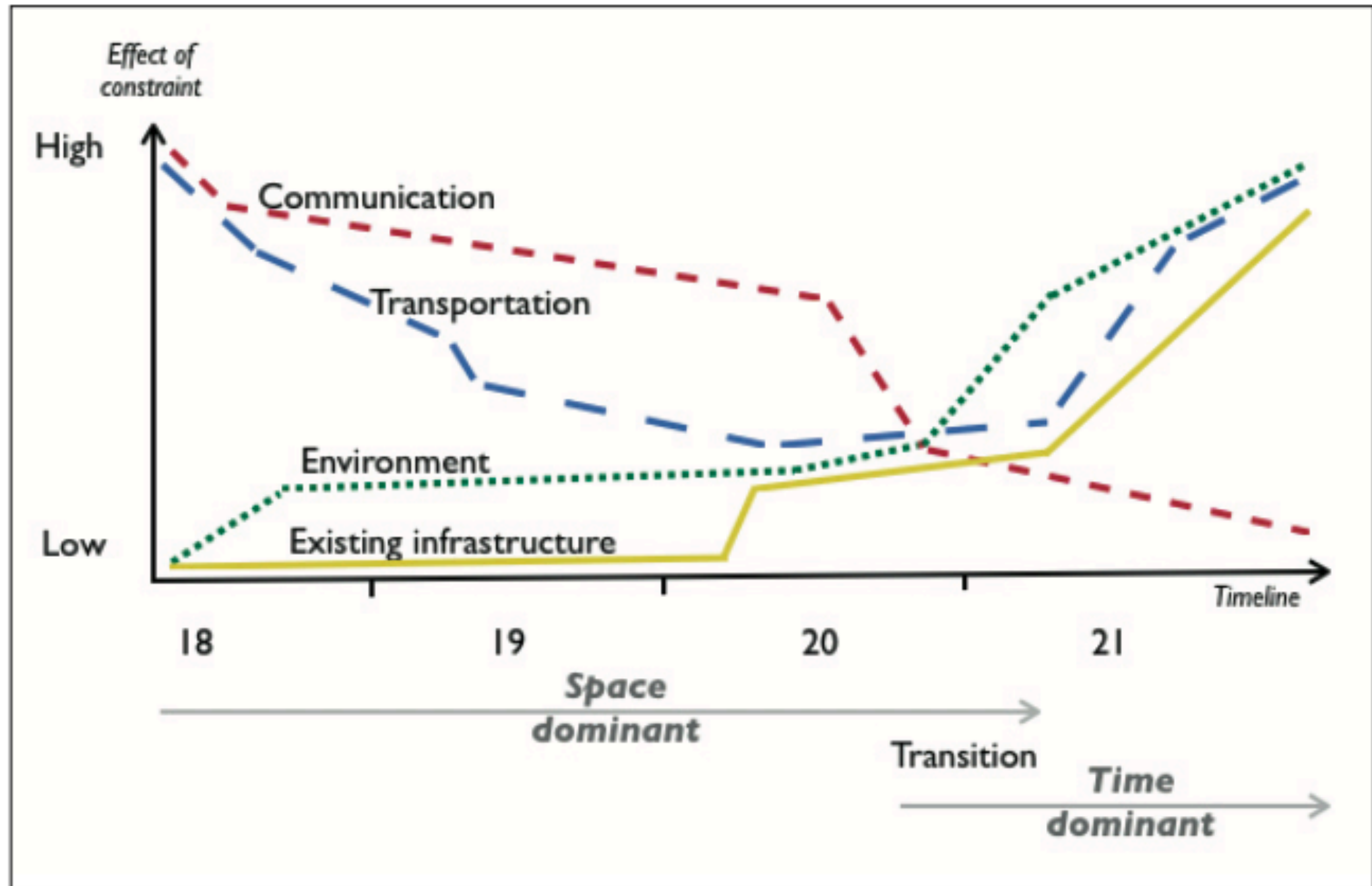
This is a conceptual “map” showing where strategic advantage considerations links with other topics in the wider field of building studies.



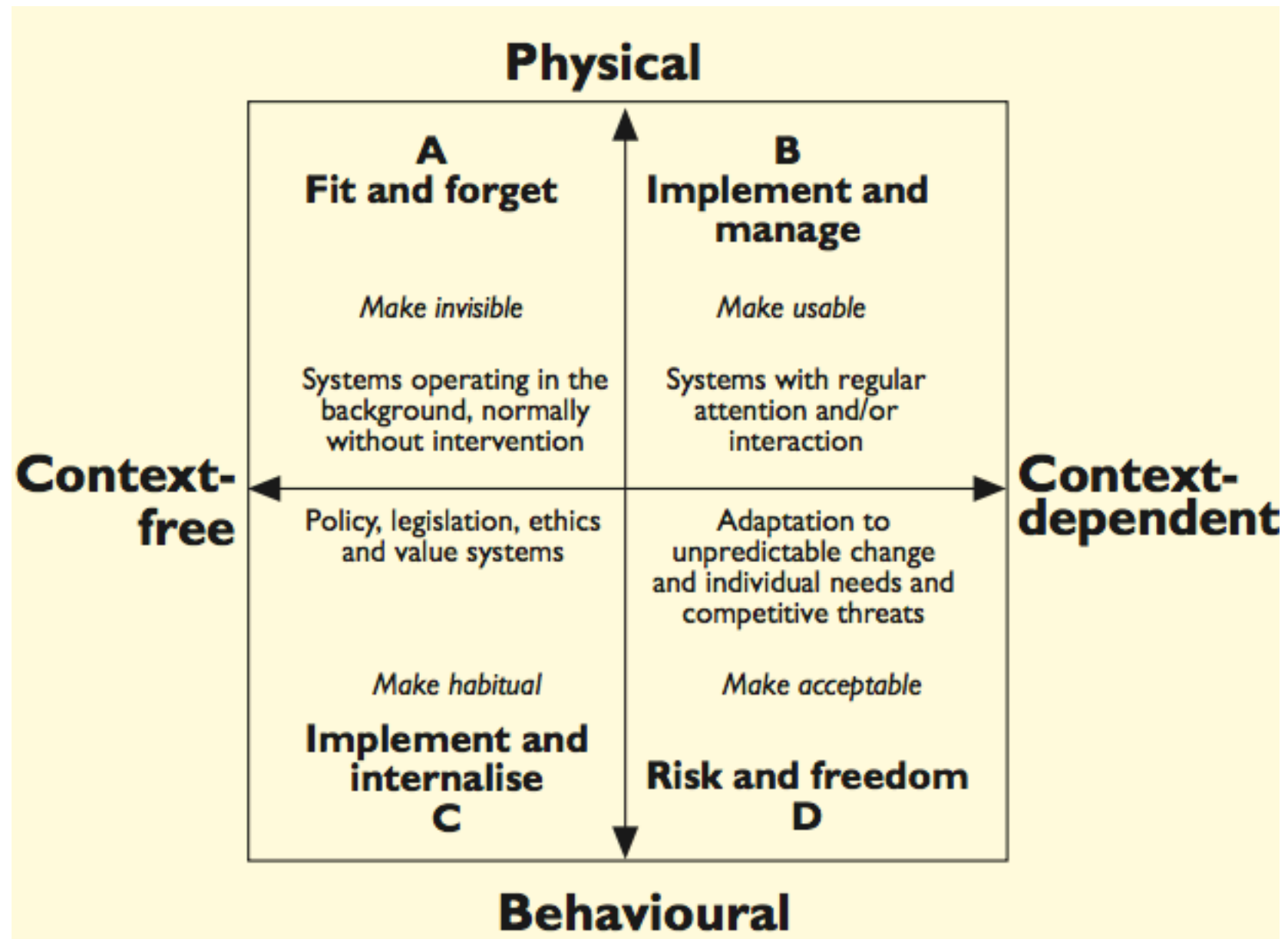
Leaman A, [User Needs and Expectations](#), chapter for Cole R. and Lorch R. (eds), Information, Buildings and the Environment, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

... supporting [www.usablebuildings.co.uk](http://www.usablebuildings.co.uk)

**Figure 1: Main historic constraints time lines**

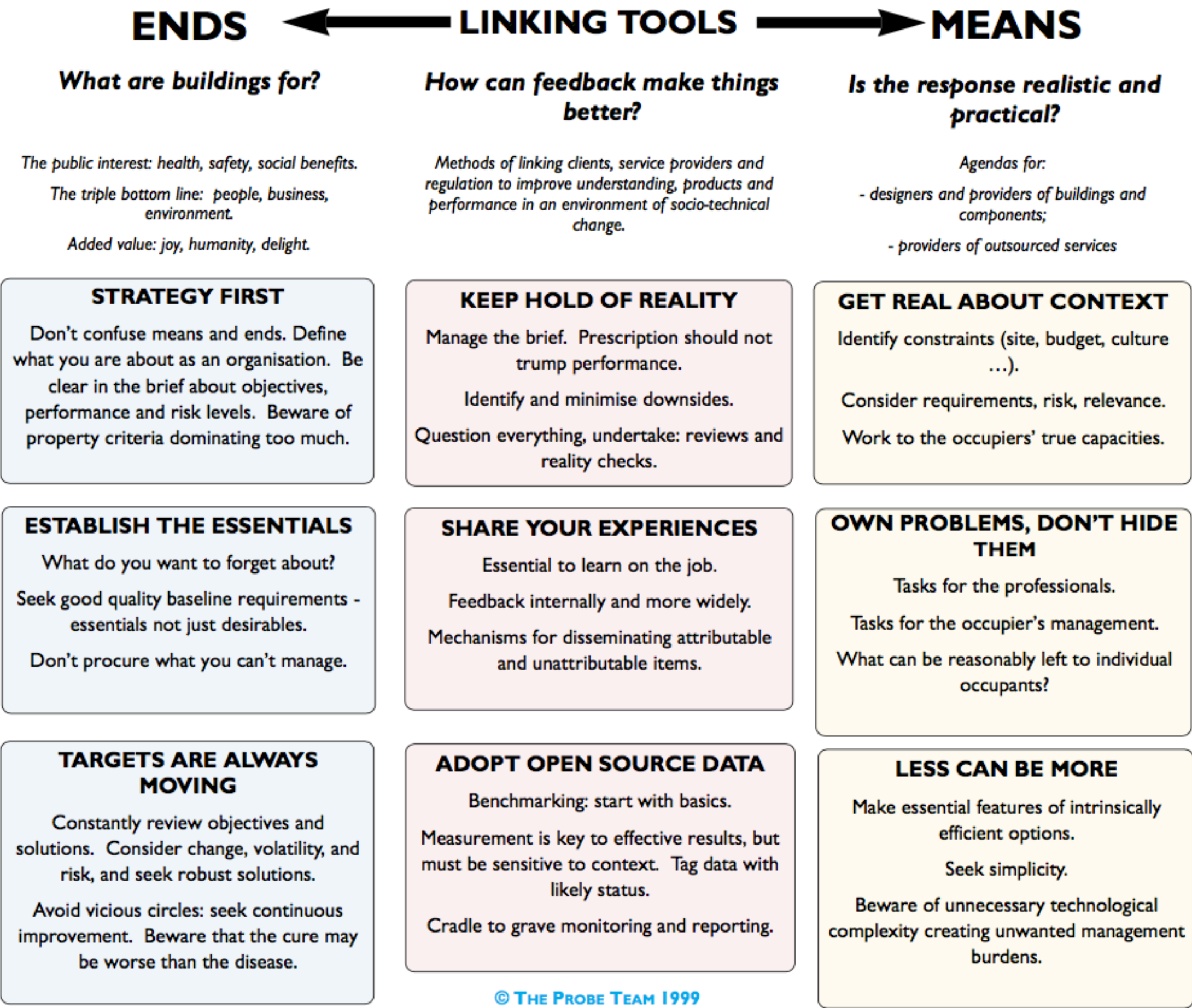


LEAMAN A., [The Logistical City](#), in WORTHINGTON J, (ed), *Reinventing the Workplace*, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997, pp. 10-22 Second edition 2005



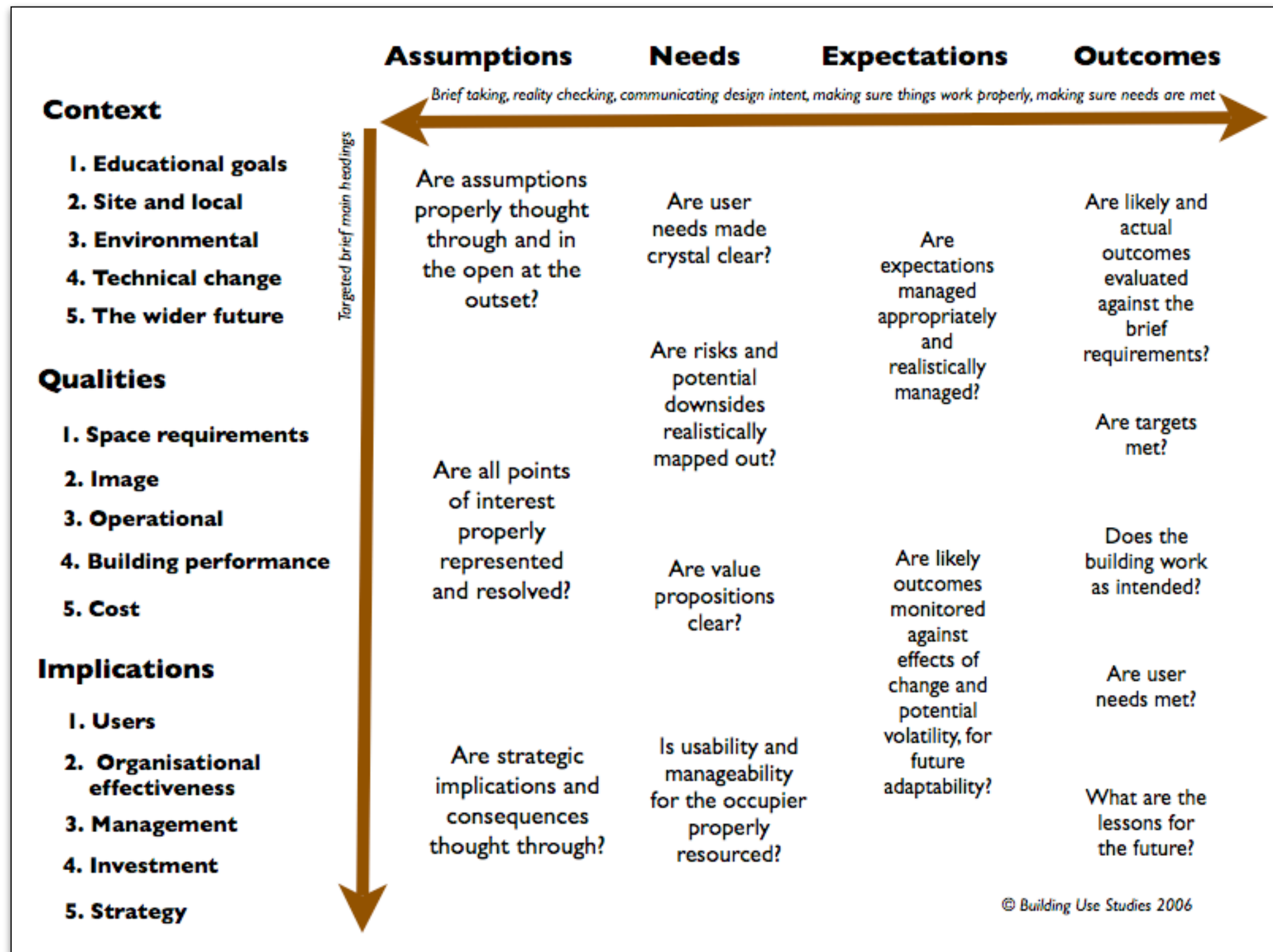
Source: Adrian Leaman and Bill Bordass

Figure 7 Ends, means and feedback with nine Probe pointers



Source: The Probe Team





Source: Adrian Leaman © Building Use Studies