# 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**

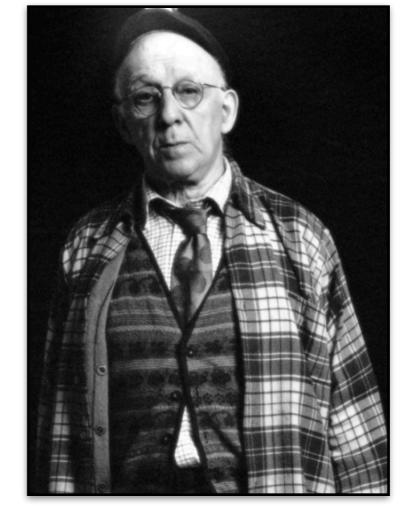
Slightly imperfect

#### **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,

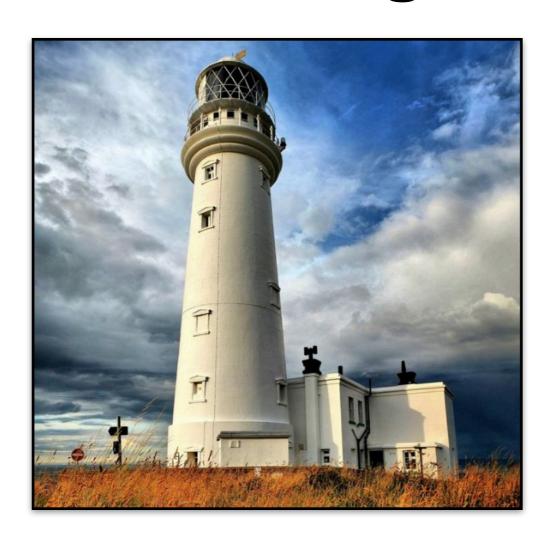
festive, friendly, gay, heartwarming, sunshiny



# 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



ı	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.





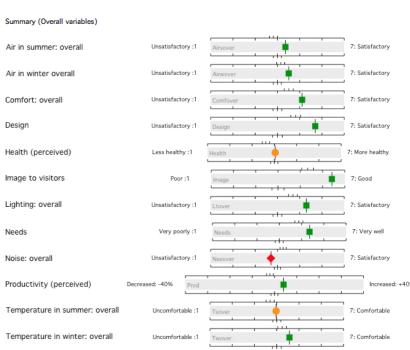
I	Utilises and enhances locational potential.	Marginal hill farm. National Trust landlord.
2	Avoids unmanageable complexity.	Off-grid. Archimedes Screw I kw generator.
3	Minimises unnecessary dependencies.	Reliant on enduring local community ties but economically dependent on handouts.
4	Offers options 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.

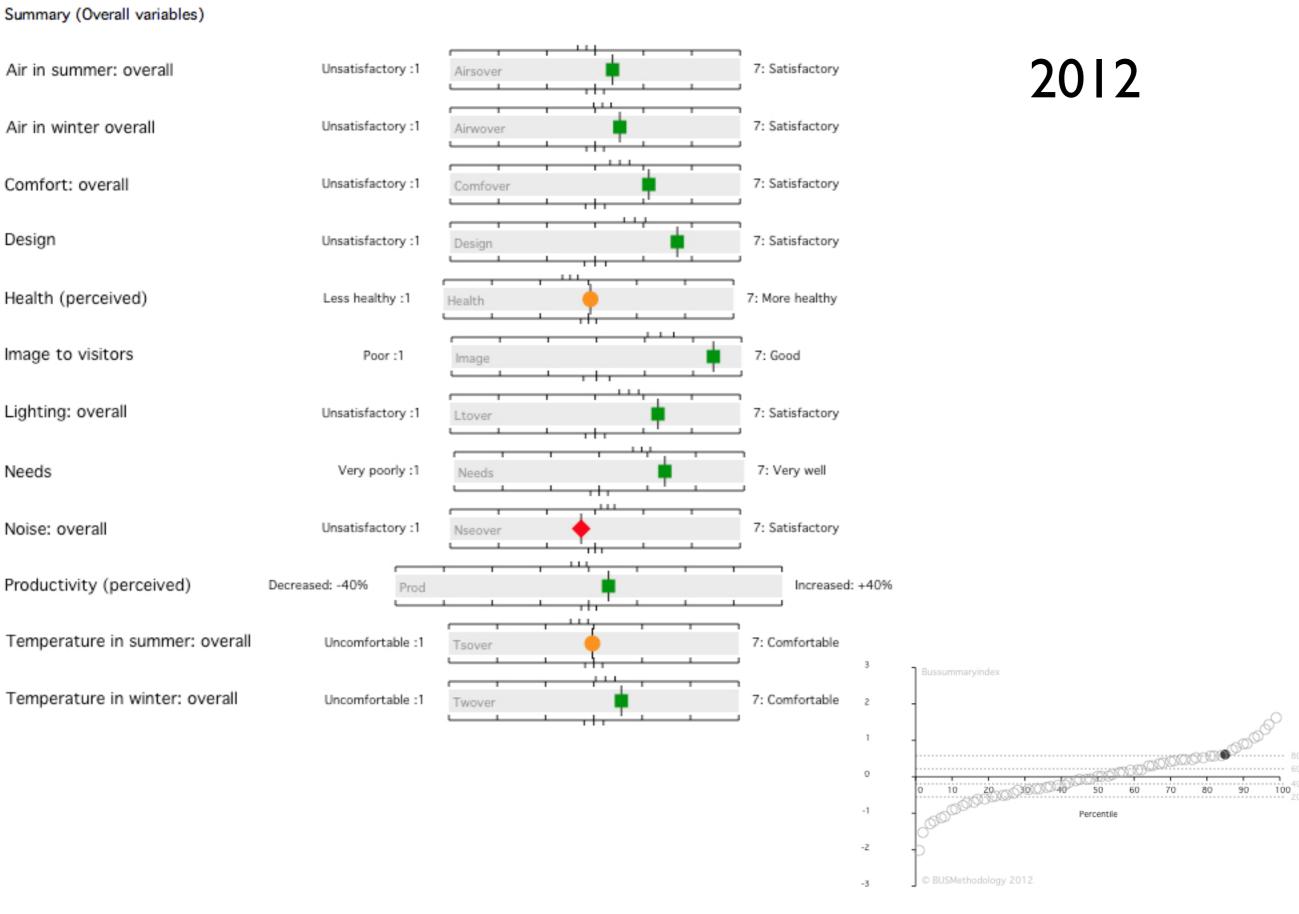




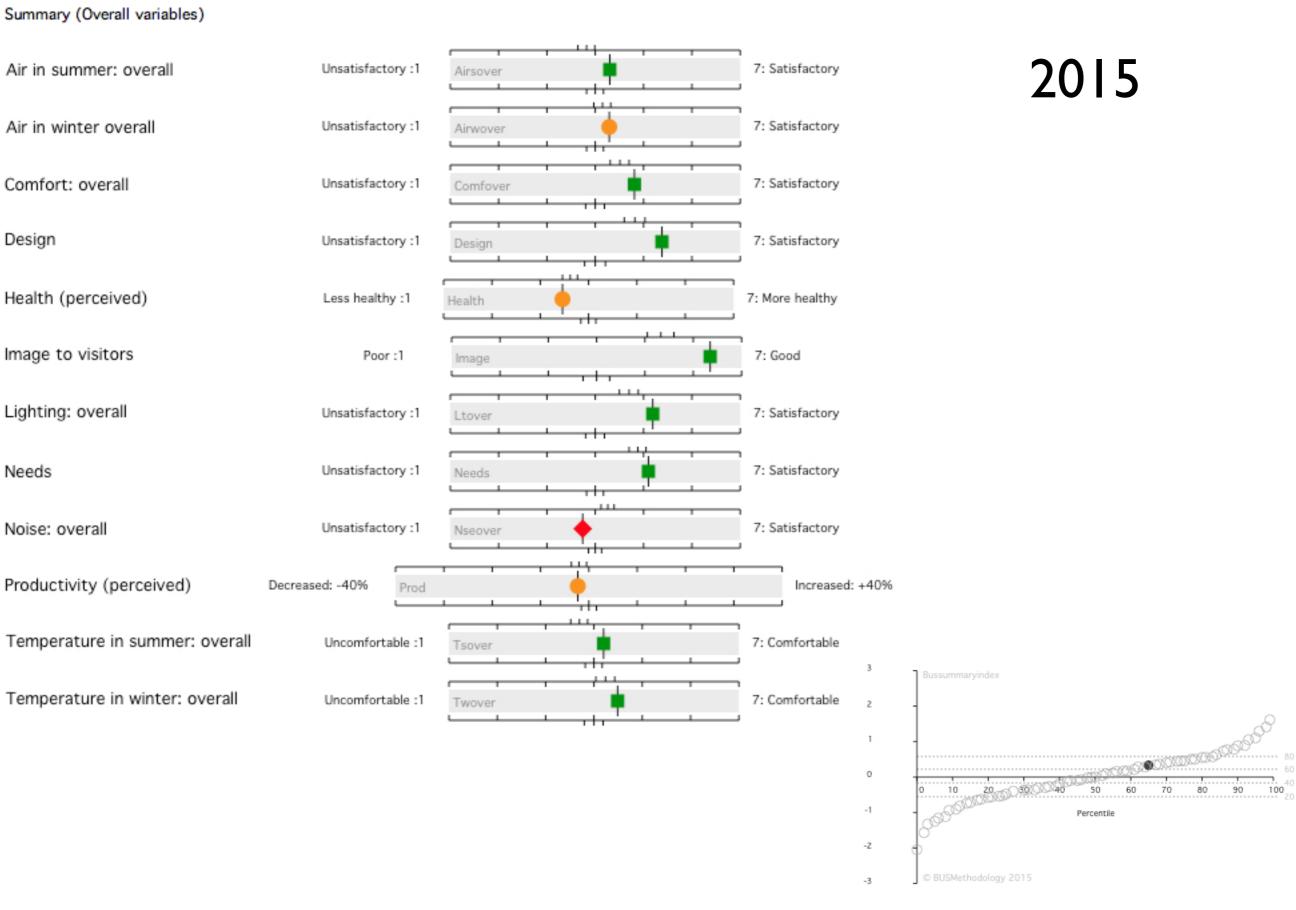
I	Utilises and enhances locational potential.	Business Park in Grantham. Aesthetics help here.
2	Avoids unmanageable complexity.	Uses 'Soft Landings' protocols. Careful and extensive briefing and handover process
3	Minimises unnecessary dependencies.	High (AC) server room dependency
4	Offers options 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.







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



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

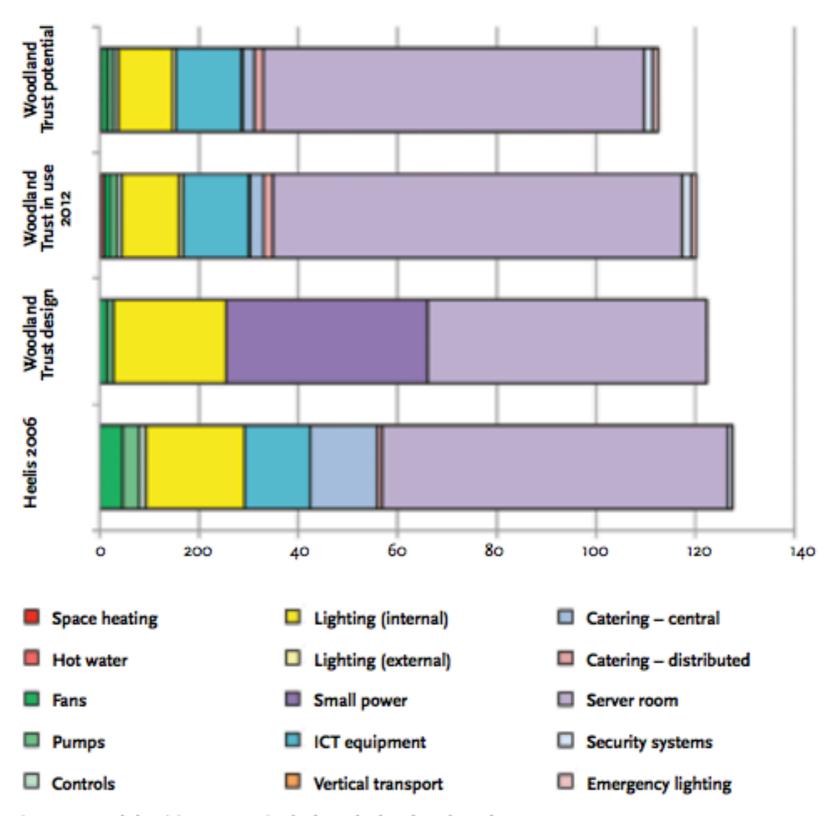


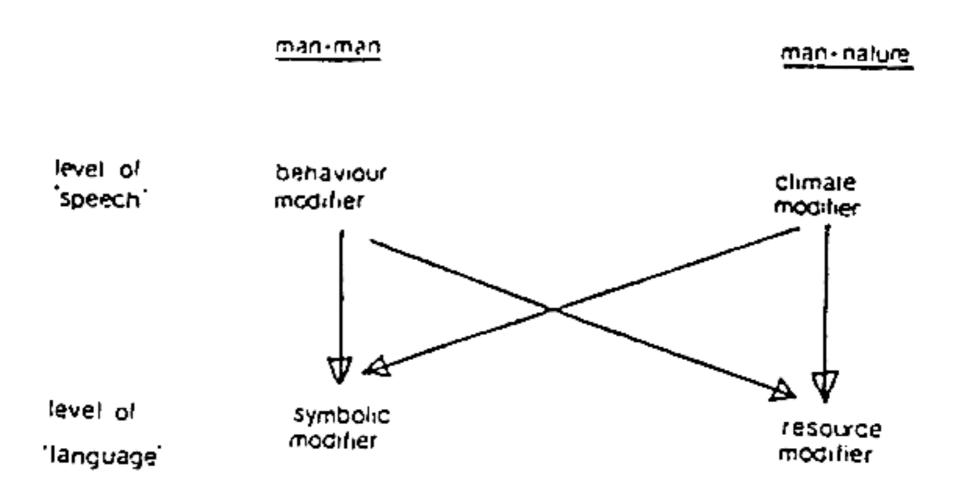
Figure 2: Annual electricity consumption kWh/m2, broken down by end use



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

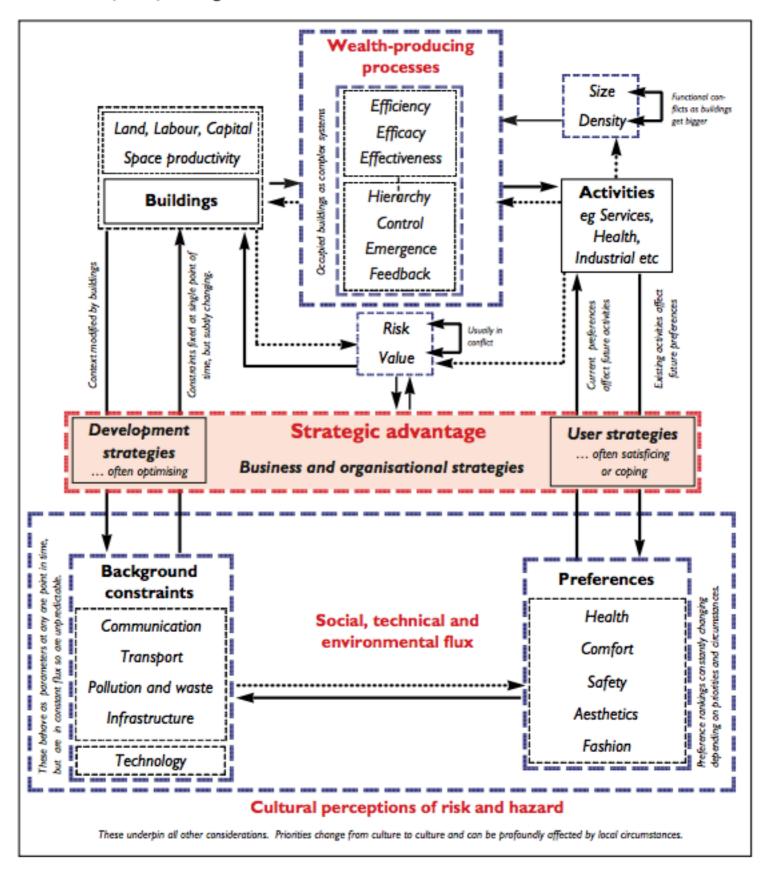


Source: How to Downsize a Transport Network: The Chinese Wheelbarrow; Kris de Decker, Low-Tech Magazine http://www.lowtechmagazine.com



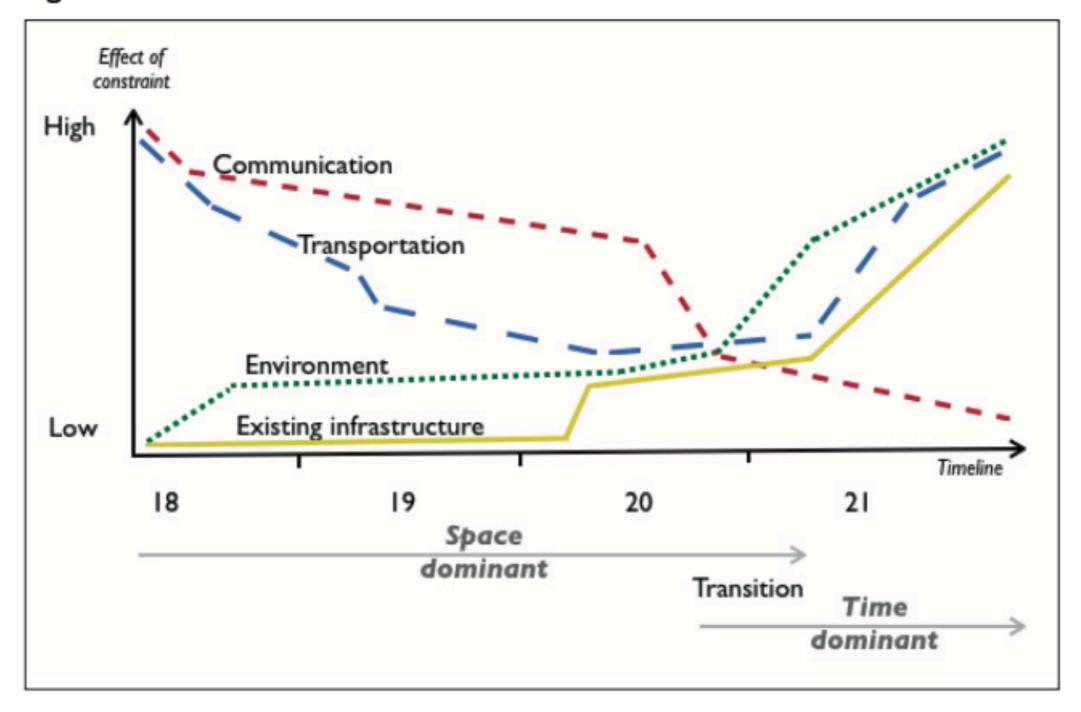
Hiller B and Leaman A: How Is Design Possible, Journal of Architectural Research, 3/1, 1974

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

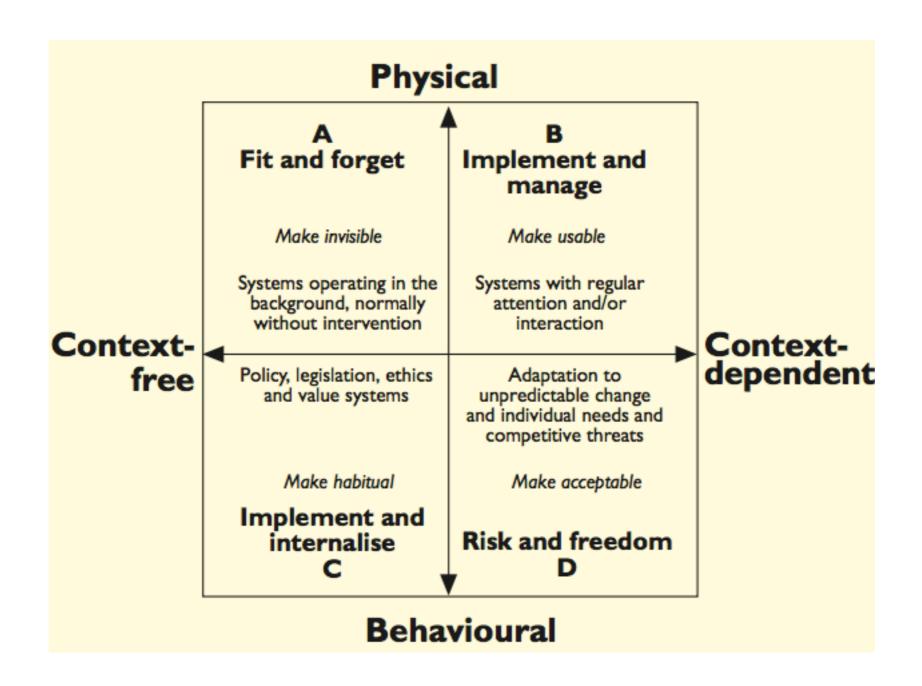


Leaman A, <u>User Needs and Expectations</u>, chapter for Cole R. and Lorch R. (eds), Information, Buildings and the Environment, Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

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

#### ENDS ——— LINKING TOOLS ———— MEANS

#### What are buildings for?

The public interest: health, safety, social benefits.

The triple bottom line: people, business, environment.

Added value: joy, humanity, delight.

#### STRATEGY FIRST

Don't confuse means and ends. Define what you are about as an organisation. Be clear in the brief about objectives, performance and risk levels. Beware of property criteria dominating too much.

#### ESTABLISH THE ESSENTIALS

What do you want to forget about?

Seek good quality baseline requirements - essentials not just desirables.

Don't procure what you can't manage.

## TARGETS ARE ALWAYS MOVING

Constantly review objectives and solutions. Consider change, volatility, and risk, and seek robust solutions.

Avoid vicious circles: seek continuous improvement. Beware that the cure may be worse than the disease.

## How can feedback make things better?

Methods of linking clients, service providers and regulation to improve understanding, products and performance in an environment of socio-technical change.

#### KEEP HOLD OF REALITY

Manage the brief. Prescription should not trump performance.

Identify and minimise downsides.

Question everything, undertake: reviews and reality checks.

#### SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Essential to learn on the job.

Feedback internally and more widely.

Mechanisms for disseminating attributable and unattributable items.

#### ADOPT OPEN SOURCE DATA

Benchmarking: start with basics.

Measurement is key to effective results, but must be sensitive to context. Tag data with likely status.

Cradle to grave monitoring and reporting.

© THE PROBE TEAM 1999

## Is the response realistic and practical?

Agendas for:

- designers and providers of buildings and components;
  - providers of outsourced services

#### **GET REAL ABOUT CONTEXT**

Identify constraints (site, budget, culture ...).

Consider requirements, risk, relevance.

Work to the occupiers' true capacities.

### OWN PROBLEMS, DON'T HIDE THEM

Tasks for the professionals.

Tasks for the occupier's management.

What can be reasonably left to individual occupants?

#### LESS CAN BE MORE

Make essential features of intrinsically efficient options.

Seek simplicity.

Beware of unnecessary technological complexity creating unwanted management burdens.

Source: The Probe Team

	Assumptions	Needs	Expectations	Outcomes
Context	_	communicating design intent,	making sure things work properly,	making sure needs are met
1. Educational goals 2. Site and local 3. Environmental 4. Technical change 5. The wider future	Are assumptions			
2. Site and local	properly thought	Are user needs made crystal clear?	Are expectations	Are likely and actual outcomes evaluated against the
3. Environmental	through and in			
4. Technical change	the open at the			
5. The wider future	outset?		managed appropriately	
Qualities		Are risks and potential	and realistically managed?	brief requirements?
I. Space requirements		downsides realistically		Are targets
	Are all points	mapped out?  Are value	Are likely	met?
2. Image	of interest			
3. Operational	properly			Does the
4. Building performance	represented			building work
5. Cost	and resolved?	propositions clear?	outcomes monitored against	as intended?
mplications			effects of change and	Are user needs met?
I. Users			potential volatility, for	needs met.
2. Organisational effectiveness	Are strategic implications and consequences	Is usability and manageability for the occupier properly	future adaptability?	What are the
3. Management				lessons for
4. Investment	thought through?	resourced?		the future?
5. Strategy	© Building Use Studies 2006			

Source: Adrian Leaman © Building Use Studies