Pedestrian-friendly street, Hove

4.4.3 STREETS AS SOCIAL PLACES

Streets for everyone

In any development the design of streets should start by asking "what will happen on this street?". The street should be designed to suit the activities that we would like to see carried out on it. For example, if the street is lined with shops it should be designed to enable people to get to the shops, cross the road, have a chat and linger in front of shop windows, or have a beer in the sun.

The re-integration of traffic and other activities is best done by creating a network of spaces rather than a hierarchy of roads. The arrangement of spaces will take full account of the movement framework for the area, including the analysis of vehicle movements. Inevitably there will be some main roads, either within the development or nearby. These are the main routes for vehicle movement, but should be designed:

- to minimise their negative effects on the area through which they pass;
- to allow their safe, pleasant and convenient use by pedestrians and cyclists.

Places not roads

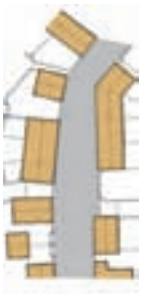
Adherence to the rigid geometry of road layouts and highway authority adoption standards produces bland, uniform developments. In designing streets, give priority to analysis of the local context, and on that basis design an appropriate network of spaces - such as streets, squares and courtyards. The principle of tracking, described here, and the careful design of junctions, will allow a level of movement to suit those spaces. In already developed areas, the designation of home zones helps produce low traffic speeds (below 30 kph: 20mph) and reinforces the sense of place.

4.4.4 TRACKING

Put the urban space first

The principle of tracking allows the roadway to flow through the middle of the space created by the arrangement of buildings without dominating it. Instead of giving priority to highway engineering requirements, its starting-point is the arrangement of buildings and enclosure. Footways are laid out in front of buildings to reinforce that arrangement. The carriageway width is then checked by plotting the vehicle tracking paths, using the minimum required widths. The kerb of the footway need not follow the line of the vehicle tracking, but sight lines and on-street parking should be taken into account.

A street designed on the principle of tracking will normally be traffic-calmed because of its layout, without the need for add-on measures. The arrangement of building frontages, and the sight lines created, induce drivers to go slowly.



Arrange buildings to form street enclosure

Design footways to reinforce this

Plot vehicle tracking path, to check carriageway width is sufficient