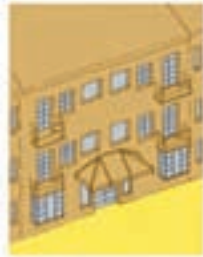




Maximising windows and doors encourages active frontage



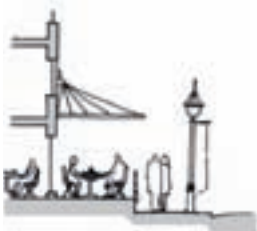
Balconies, canopies and bay windows can further enliven the frontage



Transparent windows enable communication between inside and outside



Level changes can promote surveillance while retaining privacy



'Spill out' space adds vitality to the public realm

Reach out to the street

Devices can be incorporated into a façade so that a building reaches out to the street. Views into a building provide interest to passers-by and make its function apparent, while views out put 'eyes on streets', and contribute to safety. At the very least, windows can imply the presence of others.

Adding visual interest and animation to façades means:

- the more windows and doors onto the public realm the better.
- using transparent glass for windows, where privacy allows, rather than mirrored or frosted glass that only allows occupants to benefit from views out;
- enlivening edges with balconies, bays, porches, awnings, colonnades or other projections that provide a more comfortable threshold in inclement weather, prolonging activities and enabling uses to overlap into the street;
- considering level changes between the ground building level and pavement, with steps up to house front doors or raised terraces for pubs or restaurants, for example. A change of up to 450mm is often desirable to give a sense of privacy and surveillance, but take care not to constrain access – particularly for the disabled (see 5.4.2).

'Capturing' road – side space can create opportunities for informal activities to add vitality to a place. Streets can be attractively colonised by enabling restaurants, cafes and pubs to 'spill out'.

Make buildings give

Urban design doesn't stop at the front door. Lively interior activities that are more public can enliven outdoor spaces, improve both the aspect and prospect, and often boost the profile of commercial uses. This requires that the more active uses of the building's accommodation schedule - (say) an employee canteen, a theatre's ticket booth or an office's reception area - are first identified and then orientated towards focal outdoor spaces, rather than buried in the building's interior.

Where opportunities are limited, such as with 'big-boxes' that have a building envelope only able to provide about 25% active frontage (such as main entrance, café or checkouts), make sure that blank sides and rear service areas are concealed (see 3.2.6).