



9.2 Times Square today (Broadway x 7th Avenue)

elsewhere suggests that the reaction to management and surveillance in the minds of the users of public space varies between different groups. Jackson found that generally white middle-class users found 'surveillance cameras and other security measures' reassuring, while others, particularly ethnic minority teenagers and working-class users found it a 'threat to their security and an invasion of their privacy' (Jackson 1998: 184–5). Reichl claims that the new Times Square serves to segregate the ethnic minority and poorer user, mainly through the cultural symbolism of the area (Reichl 1999: 170–1). Whether or not this is really the case can only be investigated through a detailed analysis of the space, which is the subject of the next section.

The public space and its components

This section starts the process of deconstructing Times Square from the viewpoint of the user. First the public space is discussed as a whole, analysing its key elements and constituent parts.

Experience of place

The concept of experience of place describes the simultaneous perceptions users have of space. One is the practical level of sensory perception when in a place, and a second involves experiencing place on a more subconscious level, through an extra or 'sixth sense' (Hiss 1991). Experience of place observation is used to introduce, from the point of view of the user, the first impressions of a particular place. In combination with a description of other non-visual senses, a consequential ambience or 'feel' of a space can be described. Hiss's (1991) work looked at the complexity of contemporary spaces, and his own reading of the experience of Times Square (although published one year before the formation of the BID) raises a number of important points about the space.

Hiss identified the most notable Times Square experience as the 'bowl of light' created by the meeting of Broadway, 7th Avenue, and the low surrounding buildings, which he feared was being lost in the shadow of an increasing number of tall buildings. Second, he noted the lack of places to sit or stand still. Today, the bowl of light is gone, overcome by the shadow of more tall buildings, and there are still few places to rest. Moreover, because the approach from the north or south, along Broadway or 7th