Natural/semi-natural urban space
Civic space
Public open space
Movement space
Service space
Left over space
Undefined space
Interchange space
Public 'private' space
Conspicuous spaces
Retail space
Third place spaces
Private 'public' space
Visible private space
Interface spaces
User selecting spaces
Private open space
External private space
Internal private space

3.22 Space types: Greenwich

The reality is that public space can be classified in all these ways and more. Thus Kohn (2004: 11–12) concludes that the term public space is a cluster concept in that it has multiple and sometimes contradictory definitions. She identifies three concepts to distinguish between spaces: ownership, accessibility and intersubjectivity (whether it fosters communication and interaction), but concludes that a categorisation is becoming increasingly difficult as public and private realms are increasingly intertwined.

Nevertheless, as much of the contemporary public space 'problem' revolves around a failure to understand public space and its multiple dimensions, arguably it may be more by accident than design that public space has deteriorated. With this in mind it is useful to conclude with one further typology, one that specifically addresses the concern on which this book focuses; the management of public space (see Table 3.1).

Reflecting the discussion in this chapter, and developing Kohn's three-part classification, this new typology uses aspects of function, ownership, and perception to distinguish between space types. Twenty types are identified in four overarching categories, reflecting a continuum from clearly public to clearly private space.

Table 3.1 demonstrates both the wide range of space types that a typical urban area would possess, but also how many of these are in one sense or another ambiguous in that their ownership and the extent to which they are 'public', or not, is unclear. Some of these have always

been so, for example private shops that are nevertheless publicly accessible. Others, for example the forms of internalised 'public' space, are relatively recent phenomena, or are simply becoming more dominant in the urban areas.

Figure 3.22 and 3.23 illustrate how for two different Thames-side town centre contexts in south-east London, the balance of space types varies, but also that each is made up of a patchwork of different public space types and, consequently, different management requirements and responsibilities. In Greenwich, a World Heritage site, the historic urban grain remains largely intact, and although conflict exists between vehicles and people, space remains largely public. There, however, the naval history of the town has left behind a large number of institutional buildings in grounds that bring with them their own restrictions on public access, and a fragmented pattern of ownership. Erith, by contrast, offers a fragmented landscape, where private interests have been allowed to buy up and now manage much of the town centre in their own narrow interests. The result is a car-dominated and controlled landscape, where the former 'public' parts of the town have been left to decline, and are now eschewed by much of the local population. No public life of any significance remains in the traditional public spaces of the town.