9 FROM STREETS TO PATTERNS

Neo-traditional urbanism has provided one of the main stimuli for this book: the challenge of how to base urban design on a framework of streets, rather than the Modernist framework of point blocks or 'development pods' appended off a skeletal network of distributor roads.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (and also demonstrated in Chapter 6) neo-traditional street patterns are not necessarily structurally faithful to actual traditional patterns. Moreover, they are not necessarily created in a 'traditional' manner – in other words, how those original patterns grew up themselves. Indeed, neo-traditional solutions may be imposed in a rigid manner of formal drawing-board design, in a process not unlike the kind of top-down, imposed solutions that were criticised as Modernist dysfunctionalism by the likes of Jane Jacobs and Christopher Alexander. Therefore, while much of today's urban design and planning draw inspiration from Jacobs and Alexander in principle, many of today's neo-traditional design solutions seems to go against the spirit of their arguments in practice.

The term 'neo-traditionalism' implies a curious juxtaposition: something at the same time old and yet new. While there is a clear logic to creating anew old-fashioned 'new towns' such as Edinburgh's Craig Plan, there is less obvious rationale to creating anew old *unplanned* towns.[1] While re-creating traditional planned layouts is a relatively straightforward matter of taking the relevant plan and applying it to a new site, the same cannot be said for the attempt to recreate the more 'organic' patterns of traditional urbanism.

That is, there is a challenge to consciously recreate patterns that were never consciously created in the first place; how to provide design guidance for forms that had no formal design in the first place. The last chapter

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