definition, connected up. And when the Urban Task Force calls for 'a clear structure of accessible routes . . . which lead from one destination point to another', we are left none the wiser as to what is envisioned.[22] These statements could apply to almost any pattern, from a rural patchwork of pathways to the spatial blueprint for a modernist megastructure.

Yet there is clearly *something* of significance that is trying to be articulated. Although there may be a confusing profusion of terms, there must be something 'there' that is being referred to. This reflects the fact that patterns cannot be concisely described with words alone.

It seems that if 'legible' and 'clear' and 'coherent' are to be treated seriously as design qualities, then they must be capable of adequate specification. Instances of street patterns that are clear and unclear, coherent and incoherent, and legible and illegible should be distinguishable. This suggests that they should be demonstrable on plan.

Pattern demonstrations

A desired pattern may be depicted on plan, which can be more structurally demonstrative than a verbal description. That said, a single diagram on its own may not necessarily isolate the key 'active ingredients' of a desired design. A more effective method is to contrast 'preferred' and 'discouraged' diagrams, to help demonstrate the key properties (Figure 2.7).[23] Current urban design guidance typically depicts a grid-like pattern as the preferred case and a tributary pattern of loops and culs-de-sac as the discouraged one – although in the past the reverse was the case.[24]

However, in presenting a simple polarisation, even the use of paired diagrams may only be able to demonstrate rather crudely the difference between extreme types, such as between grid and cul-de-sac systems. In reality, there will be a range of types spanning between these extremes; although as yet design guidance tends not to draw or define finer distinctions.

A second problem is that illustrative diagrams in general tend to bind together different connotations in a single layout depiction – and it may not be known which connotations are essential and explicitly intended, or which are incidental features that are not supposed to be a definitive part of the demonstration. For example, a 'preferred grid' may be depicted as orthogonal (right-angled) and rectilinear (straight-lined), whereas a simple topological connectivity might be all that was intended. Conversely, there is no way of knowing if a 'preferred grid' that happens to depict a loose 'organic' pattern expressly implies that rigid rectilinearity is to be rejected or not.