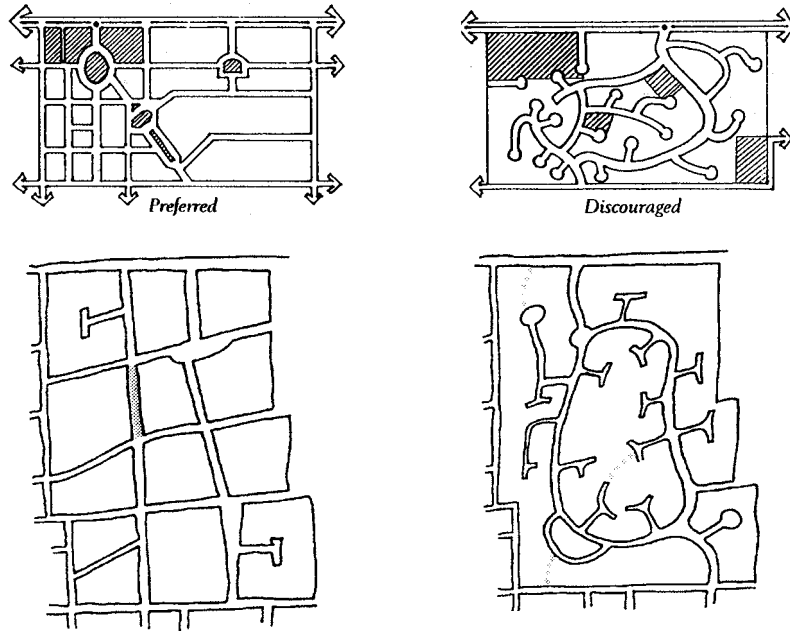


2.7 • Examples of 'preferred' and 'discouraged' layouts.



This tells us that while the depiction of a plan is in one sense useful by being structurally explicit, in another sense, it may also be open to misinterpretation, since it is not necessarily clear which parts of the plan are essential properties, intended to be taken literally as generalised principles. In other words, the use of plans has advantages from the point of view of description, but may have disadvantages from the point of view of prescription.

Problems of prescription

There appear, therefore, to be some problems with the prescription of patterns for design guidance. First, we have seen verbal descriptions of properties which do not clearly specify geometric patterns that could be followed (Figure 2.6). Second, we have seen explicit graphical presentations of 'preferred' and 'discouraged' patterns (Figure 2.7), which might be ambiguous from another point of view. These might be too *specific*, by including incidental detail that is not explicitly intended as part of the prescription. This detail may inadvertently suppress other possible variants, inhibiting creativity.²⁵

There is also a further problem, relating to how desired exemplars may be followed by practitioners. For example, the design guide *Places, Streets*