

on the ambivalence as to ‘whether we are specifying design characteristics to help define road types, or vice versa’. Meanwhile, Phil Goodwin has suggested that a functional hierarchy of roads is simply a ‘fantasy’.²⁹

Exploring the characteristics of classification and hierarchy will require consideration of the meaning of ‘function’, how function is allocated, how street type relates to position in the street pattern, and to hierarchical structure. Getting to the bottom of the issue of street type will be a full analysis in its own right (Chapter 3).

‘Bad’ versus ‘good’ hierarchy

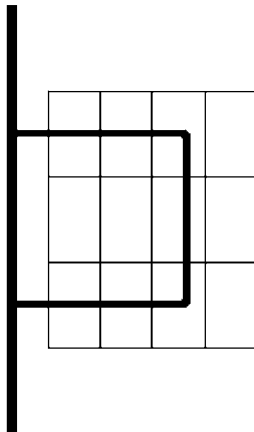
Although conventional road hierarchy is often criticised, sometimes urban designers and planners themselves appreciate *some* kind of hierarchy, based on distinguishing different kinds of street type. Design guides will call for a network that ‘clearly distinguishes between arterial routes and local streets’, a ‘clearly recognisable hierarchy of streets’, a ‘hierarchy of clear connections’ or a ‘hierarchy of routes and places’. Earlier, we saw the case of Poundbury (Figure 2.9) where a hierarchy of street types was presented.³⁰

So, some kind of hierarchy can be ‘good’ from an urban design point of view – although it is not necessarily clear or consistent what this ‘good hierarchy’ entails. It might be contrasted with ‘bad’ hierarchy of conventional engineering approaches, but even here, the distinction is not necessarily clear.

For example, in the USA, the ITE’s *Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines* suggest that ‘While TND street networks do not follow the same rigid functional classification of conventional neighborhoods with local, collector, arterial, and other streets, TND streets are hierarchical to facilitate necessary movements.’³¹

The *Essex Design Guide* is confusing in a slightly different way. It explicitly rejects having a ‘hierarchy of road types’, but this appears to be contradicted by the depiction and listing of road types which appear to be controlled in a way indistinguishable from conventional road hierarchy³² (Figure 2.11).

There is surely something going on here. There is evidently something ‘good’ about a hierarchy of different kinds of street that may be desirable from the urban designers’ and planners’ point of view. Yet this is not clearly articulated in the examples discussed. Nevertheless, the urban designers seem fairly sure that it is not the conventional engineers’ hierarchy that is desired. What is needed is, in effect, a clearer deconstruction of hierarchy and how this relates street type to street pattern (Chapter 7).



2.11 • Diagram demonstrating layout of three types of route (redrawn from the current *Essex Design Guide*).