

Second, development projects at various scales in metropolises by different interests including international financial capital, combined with the absence of effective city planning, have led to a partial breakdown of balanced territorialized communities and the generation of increasingly severe conflicts between residents and developers—who are tending to raise the density of central districts at the expense of views and day-lighting. These phenomena are particularly notable in cities of less than two hundred thousand with inadequate mass transportation systems and a greater dependence on automobiles. Many older shopping districts in the city centers have lost business to suburban shopping centers and are becoming ghost towns. Many central districts are abandoned and deteriorating.

### **Learning from Hillside Terrace**

Hillside Terrace, though extremely small (1.1 hectares), is considered one of the best examples of urban design in the postwar period in Tokyo. Hillside Terrace is a low-rise, medium-density (floor area ratio: 150 to 200 percent) mixture of housing, offices, shops, and cultural facilities. It extends approximately 250 meters along a street in a residential district in the Yamanote (“high-city”) district of Tokyo. The project was developed from 1969 over nearly twenty-five years in six phases, at times anticipating and at other times adapting to the lifestyle of the time. In those twenty-five years, the surrounding area too has undergone development. Different buildings, many of them designed with Hillside Terrace in mind, have together formed a townscape. As a result, a district with an ambience unique in Tokyo has been created. The influence it has exerted has also been noted in appraisals of Hillside Terrace. (The project received the 1993 Prince of Wales Prize in Urban Design.)

However, no urban design project of similar quality has since been realized in Japan, although it would seem an easy enough example to follow, and many communities and local governments have expressed eagerness to do so. Why? The answer lies partly in conditions unique to this project: In Tokyo, the floor area ratio is basically directly proportional to the width of the street. In this particular area, a twenty-two-meters-wide tree-lined street ran through the site. Such a wide street would ordinarily result in a high floor area ratio for any area alongside it. However, this area had already been designated a “first-class residential district” with a maximum building height of