The report is arranged into sections. A section of the report is the equivalent of a chapter of a book. A section is a significant part of the report. It is usually an account of a particular step in the design process, such as a description of the survey or an account of its analysis. The section, like the paragraph, has a beginning, a middle part and an end. The first paragraph sets out the content of the section. The middle part is composed of paragraphs, each of which develop one theme of the section. The concluding paragraph summarizes the main contents of the section and points the way to the next section. The reason for structuring the report into sections is to present information in manageable and cohesive units for clarity and ease of reading. Before starting to compose a particular section it is useful to list the themes which will form the basis of the paragraphs. The list of these ideas should be organized so that one topic leads logically to the next. If the author cannot state the idea in each paragraph simply then it is unlikely that the reader will understand what he reads. If the idea in each paragraph is unclear, or if each paragraph does not lead rationally to the next idea then the text is unlikely to present a coherent and precise account to the reader.

The detailed structure of an urban design project may take a number of forms: it varies to suit the requirements of the type of project. Normally, however, it contains information on three main subject areas. The first subject is a description of the survey or investigation. The second main subject area covers the analysis of the survey material. The final subject area is the synthesis of ideas leading to the proposed solution. Urban design is an iterative process, that is, the designer does not follow the stages of the process in a linear fashion, completing the survey, then proceeding to its analysis, followed by synthesis or design. The nature of the problem may at first be unclear. The definition of the problem may be discovered by confronting the limited evidence available with a number of partial solutions. Both problem definition and

solution unfold together during this process of iteration. To describe this cyclical design process blow by blow would result in a confused and confusing report. For the sake of brevity and clarity the design process is presented as if it were a linear progression from project inception to the distillation of the solution. All the return loops and untidy abortive endeavours which are inevitable in the design process are simplified.

The report starts with an abstract, sometimes called an executive summary. This is the part of the report which most people read. It should therefore be composed with great care. The executive summary is written particularly for the busy politician who wants to know the key information in the report without taking time to read the full document. Others may read the executive summary and then turn to read particular sections of the report which they believe are of interest or are of greatest significance. Sir Winston Churchill is reported as saying that an idea which cannot be summarized on one side of foolscap is not worth considering. This may be an extreme position to take on this subject, nevertheless, the core of the idea should appear at the start of the executive summary. It should be brief and preferably

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- CLIENT'S BRIEF including goals, objectives and programme
- INVESTIGATION including site surveys and study of design precedents
- ANALYSIS of the survey and other evidence gathered
- PROBLEM STATEMENT including generation of alternative solutions
- EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES
- DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN
- IMPLEMENTATION including cost, delivery of the plan, phasing and arrangements for monitoring

Figure 7.1 Urban design report: list of contents.