

learnt from those that have been regarded as failures. Both types are included in this book.

There are many definitions of urban design. Going back 50 years to the very origins of the term ‘urban design’ serves us well. In 1955, Clarence Stein said urban design ‘is the art of relating STRUCTURES to one another and to their NATURAL SETTING to serve CONTEMPORARY LIVING’ (Stein, 1955). Implicit in this statement is a concern in meeting public interest needs in the design of the public realm of human settlements. The statement is also so general that few will dispute it. A range of work that has attempted to follow Clarence Stein’s dictum is included in this book. The purpose is to understand the resources, intellectual and financial upon which specific projects have drawn. To adequately achieve this end some sort of classification system is, however, needed if other than a haphazard set of observations is to be made.

### **An Evolving Typology**

Typology, when it does not refer to the study of printing fonts, refers to the classification or categorization of specimens. ‘We think, conceive, represent, and talk of places in and through categories, and we fabricate, occupy, and regulate places in categories as well’ (Schneekloth and Franck, 1994). There is a long history to the classification of projects by architects and other design professionals usually in terms of use – building types, for instance, but also in terms of geometrical types, and structural and constructional systems (Pevsner, 1976). The classification of examples enables designers to refer to processes and products that might be of use in informing them about the situation that they face and the possible ways of dealing with it.

The argument presented in this book, particularly in Chapter 3, is that in order to understand the domain of urban design it is useful to categorize urban design projects using a three-dimensional matrix of types – in terms of: (1) the design and implementation procedure, (2) the product type and (3) the major paradigm that structures the process and gives form to the product. Implicit in the paradigm is the focus of design concern (i.e. the functions of the product considered to be more important). There are many more dimensions that one could add to the typology but there needs to be a balance between striving to achieve exhaustive completeness and the need to be able to use the typology. For the moment a three-dimensional model will have to suffice (see Figure 3.8).

This three-dimensional classification system enables the basic characteristics of any individual project to be identified and thus the important distinctions amongst project types to be understood. For design professionals this categorization provides the basis for asking questions about how best they might proceed in any given situation. The danger is that the similarities between the situation in a case and the situation that a designer faces may be seen to be